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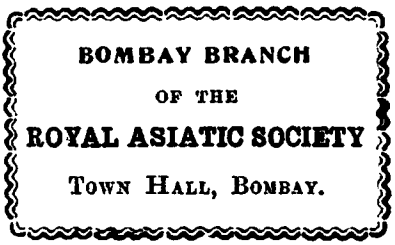

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the progress of his philological reasoning to make a remark not quite foreign to the subject, and which is, in my humble opinion, so momentous in itself, and so well stated, as to deserve the notice of all devout inquirers after Divine truth. It is "that, whatever may be the etymology of these two words, and whatever the true interpretation of either, it cannot be without some reason,—it cannot be, as some have pretended, from the mere caprice of language,—that the plural word is so much oftener used in the Scriptures as a name of God than the singular. That the plural word is used with the design of intimating a plurality in the Godhead, in some respect or other, it is strange that any one should doubt, who has observed that it is used in places, in which, if there be in truth no plurality in the Godhead, the inspired writers must have been determined, by the principles of their religion, studiously to avoid the use of a plural;* especially as they had singulars at command. The plural is used in that very precept, which prohibits the

* "The *Talmudists* themselves were so persuaded of a plurality expressed in the word *Elohim*, as to teach in Title Megilla, c. i. fol. 11, that the LXX interpreters did purposely change the notion of plurality, couched in the Hebrew plural, into a Greek singular, as they did also on Gen. i. 26 and xi. 7. *Ptolomy Philadelph.* should conclude that the *Jews*, as well as himself, had a belief of *Polytheism*. That was taken notice of by S. *Jerom*, in his preface to the book *De Quæst. Hebr.*" *Allix's Judgment of the Ancient Jewish Church. p.* 124.

worship of any God but one. 'I *Jehovah* am thy *Gods* that brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.' 'Be not unto thee other *Gods* beside me;' and in every subsequent part of the Decalogue, where God is mentioned, the plural word is introduced. In the second commandment, 'For I *Jehovah* am thy *Gods*. In the third, 'Take not the name of *Jehovah* thy *Gods* in vain.' In the fourth, 'The Sabbath of *Jehovah* thy *Gods*.' In the fifth, 'The land which *Jehovah* thy *Gods* is giving thee.' Whoever will suppose, that this plural appellation of God, thus constantly used in the language of the law, which of all language should be the most precise and accurate,—thus used in laws asserting and upholding the single Deity of the God of Israel,—has no reference to the plurality of persons in the Godhead, should be able to demonstrate some other plurality in the Godhead, to which the expression may refer."

After mentioning and refuting the absurd supposition of Abenezra, and some Christian divines and Critics, "that this plural word is used of God for honour's sake, according to a usage of the language;" the Bishop adds, "We have, however, the admission of this learned Jewish Grammarian, that deep mystery is involved in the plural form of the Divine name *Elohim*. What mystery that may be, but some plurality in the Godhead, it is not easy to divine.

One cannot but suspect, that it is to avoid a confession of the Christian doctrines, that he pretends to help us over the difficulty, by alleging a plurality, not in God, but in external things. But we have a right to challenge those who follow him in this admission, to allege some other plurality in God Himself, than that of the persons, to which the word may allude."

The Bishop then returns to his immediate subject,—the etymology of the word; and after mentioning "the derivation of the singular אלוה, (Eloah) and the plural אלהים, (Elohim) from the Hebrew word אלה *to swear*, or *bind by an oath*, which we find first in some of the Jewish Grammarians, after them in *Cocceius*,* and, last of all, in the Hutchinsonian school;" he allows "that it commends itself at first sight by two circumstances, First, its great simplicity, inasmuch as it rejects all fanciful and uncertain compositions of more roots than one. Secondly, In that it is, or at least means to be, purely Hebrew; not going to search the archives of idolatry for the theological phraseology of the true religion.

After stating and rejecting the modes in which the Jewish grammarians and *Cocceius* have derived these Divine names from the root אלה, *to swear*, the former referring it to the prerogative of

* See also *Kircher, Avenarius, Hulsius, Buxtorf,* and *Robertson.*

Judges and Magistrates to administer oaths, and the latter to a right of malediction as vested in sovereignty;—his Lordship proceeds: "The divines, however, of the Hutchinsonian school, from this same etymology, which they adopt in common with *Cocceius*, deduce interpretations of the two words very different from this, and certainly not liable to the same exceptions. Deducing both these words, as *Cocceius* deduces them, from אלה, *to swear*, they put a great difference between the two, making the plural *Elohim* active in its signification, and the singular *Eloah* passive. In the plural *Elohim*, they understand a reference to a certain transaction and compact between the persons of the Holy Trinity, relating to the great work of man's redemption *before the world* began, which is certainly represented, both in the Old and New Testament, under the notion of an oath; and the singular *Eloah* they expound as the appropriate title of the Second Person of the Trinity, characterizing Him by the part which he engaged to sustain in the wonderful scheme of mercy. These interpretations certainly arise very naturally out of the etymology, being founded on the primary and literal sense of the word, which these Divines, with Cocceius, take to be the root. Their exposition is conformable to the view which the Holy Scriptures give of the first plan and project (if it be allowed so to speak) of redemption; and it has this particular advantage, that it

holds forth (in conformity with the whole tenor of the Scriptures) such a foundation of love, mercy, gratitude, between God and the pardoned sinner, as particularly suits the innumerable passages in which, as hath been before shown, the plural *Elohim* seems to be introduced as involving, in its proper signification, such a relation: and though some have affected to be shocked at the manner of the application of the singular *Eloah*, in the Hutchinsonian scheme of interpretation, to the Second Person, there is nothing in it but what may be fully justified by the manner in which the Holy Scriptures speak of the incarnate God, as submitting to be made a curse for man."

Having made these important concessions in favour of the etymology and interpretation, ascribed by the Hutchinsonian school to the words אלוה and אלהים,—concessions calculated surely to prejudice a reader strongly in their favour; the Bishop proceeds to state his objections to this derivation, on which with sincere and respectful deference to his Lordship's name and ability, I shall venture to offer you a few remarks.

The first objection which the Bishop makes, is built on what may be safely admitted without bringing the Hutchinsonian interpretation into any difficulty. It is that the letter vau, introduced after the second radical, does not *necessarily* constitute the verbal noun passive in its signification. This may readily be granted; but instances to

the contrary are to be considered as exceptions to the general rule, that "*vau* after the second radical is the grammatical indication of the passive voice," as, when it follows the first radical, it denotes the active voice.

The Bishop adds a second objection, that, "if the singular *Eloah* be passive, *Elohim* being merely the plural of *Eloah*, must be passive too." In this inference I cannot concur, because I cannot admit the premise. ALEIM (as I write the word in English letters) is without the *vau*, and therefore is not *merely* the plural of *Eloah*, or ALUE. In the singular noun there is a *vau* interposed, on the insertion of which the passive sense of the word solely depends. The Bishop's inference, therefore, seems to me as illegitimate, as it would be to say, that the word *swearers*, in the sense of administrators of an oath, and *sworn*, describing persons who have taken an oath, cannot be the one active and the other passive.

Neither can I perceive that it is "indispensably requisite to the truth of the Hutchinsonian interpretation, that the word *Elohim* should signify actively." For the passive signification, of persons engaged in a covenant-relation to man, will suit that scheme, as well as the active signification of persons making a covenant.

The next objections brought forward are to the etymology itself; and his Lordship truly remarks, that, "if the etymology itself should be

found to be erroneous, all interpretations built upon it, will fall to the ground."

The four first of these latter objections depend intirely, as his Lordship admits, on the Masoretic punctuation. And the Bishop himself asserts, in the same page with this admission, that "the Masoretic points are no part of the sacred text;" that they were "the invention of critics of very slender talents, (though of no small industry) in a very late age;" and that they "are of no authority at all, as affecting the words of any particular text." With respect to the inference which the Bishop draws from the uniformity with which the words אלוה and אלהים are pointed, as implying that the inventors of the points "had *some very sound and weighty reasons*, though it may not be clearly discoverable at this day, for their particular way of pointing in that instance; and that what is intimated to us under the cipher of their points concerning the etymology of the word, is what had come down to them by tradition from more informed critics in the earlier ages of the language;" this inference appears to me to have little in its favour. For if the Masoretes were critics of "a very late age," they were possessed of all the Jewish prejudices against Christianity, and one may well "suspect," to use the Bishop's own language, when in a passage already quoted he is speaking of Abenezra, that their points have been accommodated to "avoid

a confession of the Christian doctrines." And were it even proved that their interpretation "had come down to them by tradition, from more informed critics in the earlier ages of the language;" there is still abundant time for the operation of tradition between them and their equally prejudiced forefathers up to the era of the first rise of Christianity.

But the chief difficulty remains; and if it be insurmountable, the Hutchinsonian interpretation, with all the advantages which the Bishop has ascribed to it, must be given up. This objection is stated in the following words.

"It may seem that all these objections rest on the Masoretic punctuation: and it may be said, that the punctuation shows *indeed, that, in the* judgment of the Masoretes, these words are not derived from the verb אָלָה *to swear;* but their judgment might be wrong in that, as it unquestionably has been in many instances: and instead of arguing from their points against an interpretation which has so much to recommend it, we ought rather to correct the pointing. But to this it may be answered;—With respect to the plural word, the reasoning depends not at all upon the pointing, but upon the grammar of the consonants. For by that, the *plural* noun, if a masculine from the word אָלָה, *quiescent Lamed He*, ought to drop the ה in the plural."

But is not the quiescence of letters a figment

of the Masoretes? And "to suppress altogether, or to render insignificant a radical letter of any word, in order to supply its place with an arbitrary dot, or a fictitious mark, is an invention fraught with the grossest absurdity," as the author of "Elements of Hebrew Grammar"* has well observed.

But there are instances in which words *quiescent Lamed He*, as the Masoretes have called this termination, do not drop the ה in forming the plural. בלהות from בלה, with a radical, but mutable, omissible ה, like אלה, often occurs; among other places in Job xviii. 11, 14; Ps. lxxiii. 19; Ezek. xxvi. 21; xxvii. 36; xxviii. 19. And in Esra iv. 4, the participial masculine plural noun in *Hiphil*, מבלהים, answers precisely to אלהים, except that the latter word is not in *Hiphil*. But were there no such instance to be found, would it not be easier to suppose, that the letter ה had been retained, contrary to a *general* rule, for the sake of dignity in a name of Deity, or to distinguish it from the plural of אל, another name of the true God; (a biliteral name of God, from a different root, and conveying another view of his character) with which, in the plural number, ALEIM must have been confounded, if the ה had been omitted; than to give up, on such slight

* The Rev. C. Wilson, D.D. whose remarks on the doctrine of the vowel points, concur with those of Bp. Horsley before cited.

grounds, an etymology and interpretation of the word, confessedly corresponding with "the view which the Holy Scriptures give of the first plan and project of redemption;" and holding "forth such a foundation of the relation of love, mercy, gratitude, between God and the pardoned sinner, as particularly suits the innumerable passages in which, as hath been before shown, the plural *Elohim* seems to be introduced, as involving, in its proper signification, such a relation?" And it may be further observed, that, in what relates to God, grammatical anomaly is not unknown; as appears in the frequent concord between the plural אלהים and adjectives, participles and verbs singular.

It is, I believe, to the vowels that the Masoretes have applied their doctrine of *quiescence*, and not to the consonants with which they may be connected.* Now though I have produced but the instance of one word, ending in *Lamed He*, in which the ה is retained in the plural; there are many other words ending in a radical but mutable or omissible ה, which retain it in forming their plurals.†

* See Bp. Horsley's own view of the *quiescence* of letters in the Masoretic system, (*Bibl. Criticism, vol.* iv. *p.* 154, 5.) where he denominates the principles of that system "the arbitrary rules of uninspired expositors of the sacred text."

† Such are אמהות from אמה; גנהות from גנה; גבהים from גבה. See Is. v. 15, and al. freq.

The Bishop's etymological substitute for the Hutchinsonian hypothesis is, as he acknowledges, wholly conjectural. No proof can be given that the root אלה ever signifies *goodness ;* nor to my mind does it appear at all probable, that, in a language consisting of so few etymons, the same three letters should import such totally distinct ideas as *goodness* and *an oath.* That it signifies the latter we know, but evidence is still to be produced that it ever signified the former. And if there ever was such a word in the language, the same difficulty would occur about the retention of the ה in the plural noun, as we know that it is found in the singular אלוה. The idea of *relation* and of *goodness,* for which the Bishop *contends, is as fully* conveyed by the Hutchinsonian etymology as by his own ; nay, in a much more energetic sense.

In relation to the singular noun *Eloah,* the Bishop says, "Unless it be *proved,* which we believe will not easily be done, that the exposition of it, as applied in a passive sense to the Second Person of the Trinity in particular, in the passages in which the word occurs, produces some particular emphasis or propriety in all, or at least in many of them ; that exposition, and that appropriation of the word, will remain very questionable." Now what the Right Rev. Critic deems incapable of proof, with respect to many of the passages in which the title ALUE is found, appears to me

plain on a cursory inspection of them. Let us select a few by way of experiment.

The title ALUE occurs first, I believe, in Deut. xxxii. 15. "Then he (Jeshurun) forsook God (ALUE) that made him; and lightly esteemed the Rock of his Salvation." Now, without staying to prove that "the Rock of Salvation" is a title of the Divine Mediator, and that it is another title of the same Personage who is before called ALUE; or that ALUE could be "the Rock of Salvation," temporal or spiritual, only as he was to be made *a curse* (*καταρα*, Gal. iii. 13.) for man; it will be sufficient to refer you to the declaration of St. Paul, (1 Cor. x. 9.) that it was *Christ* whom the Israelites, or Jeshurun, "tempted, forsook, and lightly esteemed."

From Moses we proceed to the book of Job, where the name ALUE frequently occurs. The first passage to which I shall direct your attention, is one of great importance, as it appears in the form of a Divine determination, given to a question which had been in debate between the afflicted patriarch and his friends. (Chap. iv. 17.) It proceeds from the lips of Eliphaz, who in prefacing the rehearsal of it, assumes to himself the Spirit of inspiration. (Ver. 13, &c.) There is, I conceive, no reason for doubting the claim which he makes, from the circumstance of the erroneous judgment he formed of the character of Job when not under the same influence. The

decisive language of the heavenly vision is evidently intended to lay prostrate all self-righteous hopes. It runs thus, according to our English version: "Shall mortal man be more just than God (ALUE)? Shall a man be more pure than his Maker?" But might it not be rendered thus? "Shall wretched man" (אנוש) "without ALUE be justified, or shall man" (גבר man in his best estate) "be pure without his Maker," the sole author of the new creation?* But if the version of our English Bible be preferred, no doubt can exist respecting the propriety of the term ALUE, according to the preceding interpretation of that word, in such a connexion.

Nearly the same view may be taken respecting the introduction of the title ALUE in Job xxxiii. 12; especially if it be considered that it stands connected with the account which *Elihu* gives of the ANGEL INTERCESSOR, the "one of a thousand," towards the close of the same chapter, whose language concerning man is there stated to be, "Deliver him from going down to the pit; *I have found a ransom.*"

The next passage to which I refer you is Job xvi. 20. "O that one might plead for a man with God (ALUE,) as a man pleadeth for his neighbour." Without entering into a critical examination of the patriarch's passionate wish, it

* See Letter XXXIV.

may be sufficient to remark, that its object was an access to God, in order to plead his cause before him, with the same familiarity and confidence as when a man pleads with his fellow men. In allusion to this wish, Elihu is introduced (chap. xxxiii. 6.) saying, "Behold, I am, *according to thy wish*, in God's* stead. I also am formed out of the clay." Now without contending, as *some* Hutchinsonians have done, that Elihu was a personification, or at least a type, of the Son of God, on what ground could Job found such a wish, but on the knowledge which our next reference will show that he possessed of the future incarnation of the personage whom he calls ALUE; and what hope could he entertain of success in pleading his cause before him, except what he derived from his future "agony and bloody sweat, his cross and passion;" or, in other words, from the prospect of his being "made *a curse* for us."

A few words will suffice on Job xix. 25—27. "For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God, (ALUE) whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold and not another." That the REDEEMER (גּוֹאֵל†) in the first part of this wonderful decla-

* אל not אלוה

† The name given to the near kinsman, Num. xxxv. 19, &c.

ration, and the ALUE in the second part, are one and the same person, you will not, I presume, hesitate to admit; nor that the redemption ascribed to the ALUE was to be effected by his "being made *a curse* for us."

In Psalm xviii. 31, occur the following animated questions, "Who is God (ALUE) but JEHOVAH; or who is a Rock save our God? (אלהינו.) Of this Psalm the Bishop says in his critical notes, "The title of this 18th Psalm might be thus rendered, 'To the Giver of victory. A Psalm of the servant of JEHOVAH, the beloved, who spake unto JEHOVAH the words of this song, in the day that JEHOVAH delivered him from the hands of all his enemies, *and from the power of hell.*'" He adds, approving the view of the subject which he quotes, "The Syriac entitles it, A thanksgiving on the ascension of Christ." Now admitting that the man Christ Jesus is the complainant in the former part of the Psalm, to whom may he be supposed to attribute his deliverance "*from the power of hell*," or, "*the curse of the law*," but to the Godhead with which the manhood was united, and which bears the name of ALUE to indicate that union?

The only other passage to which I shall refer you, is Isa. xliv. 8. "Is there a God, ALUE, besides me? Yea there is no God (צור *Rock*). I know not any." Now it is evident that the

ALUE and Rock, mentioned in this verse, are to be identified with "JEHOVAH, the King of Israel, and Israel's *Redeemer*, the Lord of hosts," who is introduced as the speaker in ver. 6; and as the Bishop himself, in his notes on this chapter, considers its subject to be "the general redemption of mankind by a descendant of Abraham," he could hardly object to a reference of the question in the 8th verse, to a claim made by the Divine Mediator to a participation of Deity, as being JEHOVAH Incarnate. (Phil. ii. 6.) And the notion of a spiritual redemption is always connected with the redemption-price, the payment of which we suppose to be implied in the awful title ALUE.

If, my dear friend, the etymology and interpretation of the two awful but gracious titles, ALEIM and ALUE, which I have advocated, be founded in truth; we may expect to find frequent allusions to their import scattered over the pages of Divine Revelation: And therein we shall not be disappointed. The whole record is an elucidation of that covenant, confirmed by oath, into which the Persons of the Godhead entered for the redemption and salvation of fallen man. To this covenant all the promises of Scripture are to be traced up as to their fountain head; with it the government of the world, in all its arrangements, and the whole narrative of the Bible, are to be connected. In the dispensations of Providence,

and the discoveries of grace, we shall discern a long consistency of character, only to be accounted for on the supposition of a vast plan formed from the beginning,—a "covenant" or obligatory disposition, *ordered in all things and sure.* (2 Sam. xxiii. 5.)

Let us inquire, my friend, before I lay down my pen, whether we can discover any intimation in the record, assigning a date to that great transaction in which the name of ALEIM originated,—when it was that the covenanting parties entered into their mutual stipulations, and our adorable ALUE bound himself to his tremendous part in the work of redemption:—whether we can discover any traces of renewals that have been graciously afforded (*I will not* say, of covenant engagement, for a supposed necessity for such renewals would imply imperfection in the contracting parties) but of the revelation of those engagements made to the persons who are beneficially interested in them:—and then let us further inquire how these solemn engagements have been hitherto fulfilled, and how the pledge given to a lost world in the titles ALEIM and ALUE, has been redeemed.

The immediate revelation which was made after the fall of man, of that scheme of mercy which was laid in the covenant of redemption, affords proof that the covenant on which the revelation was founded had a previous existence.

And we accordingly find, that one of these names, that which conveyed an endearing view of the connexion between Jehovah and his creatures in their state of innocence, (as it now conveys a more endearing view of his renewed regard to them in their lapsed state) was used both by Eve and by the Tempter in the conversation which issued in the catastrophe of the fall, and so introduced the necessity for that Divine interposition which is implied in the other title of ALUE. That the transaction to which the name of ALEIM refers, was antemundane, may be gathered from the account which our Lord gives of Himself in the 8th chapter of the book of Proverbs,* where he speaks of his designation to his office before time was;—and from the declaration of St. Peter that he was "*foreordained*" to it "before the foundation of the world;" (1 Pet. i. 20.) in relation to which we read of "the Book of Life of the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world" (Rev. xiii. 8); where, whether the date spoken of refer to the Book of Life or to the sacrifice of Christ, the passage will equally confirm the view we have taken. (Comp. Math. xiii. 35; xxv. 24. Eph. i. 4. Rev. xvii. 8.) It was, I conceive, in relation to his mediatorial character

* "'Twas of old constantly believed, that WISDOM, Prov. iii. and viii. did denote the ΛΟΓΟΣ· I have showed it from Philo the Jew, from the Apocryphal Book, and from the Cabalists." *Allix's Judgment. p.* 404.

and office, that our Lord, in addressing his heavenly Father, John xvii. 24, declares that he had been the object of his love, "before the foundation of the world." And that this designation to mediatorial office was confirmed by the solemn sanction of an *oath*, is explicitly affirmed in the cxth Psalm, where we read, ver. 4. "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." (Comp. Heb. v. 6; vii. 17.)

The first revelation of this awful transaction between the ALEIM, or Persons in the Godhead, as made to our first parents after their fall, we have already considered. That revelation was renewed after the flood, as will appear from my next letter. And when man had again lost sight of it, through a growing corruption of faith and practice, it was again revealed to Abraham, on which revelation St. Paul has largely commented in his Epistle to the Galatians (chap. iii. 6, &c.) A comment in which the name ALUE occurs in a Greek translation of it, Christ "was made A CURSE for us," ver. 13.

You must have remarked, in reading the history of the Gospels, that continual references are made to the Old Testament Scriptures, for the purpose of showing that the acts and sufferings of the Messiah were fulfilments of prophecy, and connected with a preconcerted plan of operation. The events that came to pass could not

occur otherwise than they did, because it was *written* that such events should take place, and at a precise time, and according to a prescribed manner. Now what is prophecy but prediction of the purposes of THE ETERNAL MIND, all which purposes are insured by the import of that awful title, JEHOVAH ALEIM; of whom, and of their mutual stipulations, the CHERUBIM were symbols up to the time when those stipulations began to be fulfilled in the incarnation, sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension of Him who became the ALUE for us men and for our salvation?

If the Scriptures be read with the clew to their contents which the title ALEIM furnishes,—If the Bible be considered as the record of THE ETERNAL THREE in covenant for the redemption of mankind; a continual reference to the import of that gracious title will be found in the pages of Divine Revelation. To some of those, contained in the history of the patriarchal religion, I mean that a few more letters shall relate. And should you wish to see an epitomized view of the subject to which the oath of the ALEIM referred, you will find one in the 53rd chapter of the Prophecies of Isaiah. And let me request you to remark the importance which St. Paul assigns to the oath by which our Lord Jesus Christ was constituted the high priest of our profession, in Heb. vii.; and the manner in which he comments on the

revelation of his future purposes which God made to Abraham. "When God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by Himself, saying, Surely, blessing, I will bless thee, and multiplying, I will multiply thee. And so after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Wherein God willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us." *Heb.* vi. 13—20.

God does nothing in vain: and therefore, though mutual stipulation between the Divine Persons could not be necessary to secure the fulfilment of purposes formed by infinite wisdom, almighty power, and inviolable truth; yet they were necessary to the foundation to be laid for the faith of guilty trembling convicts, whose salvation depended on the fulfilment of those purposes. Those stipulations were particularly necessary to the establishment of the awakened mind in the indulgence of hope and the enjoyment of peace, before the purposes of grace began to be fulfilled, i. e. before the incarnation of the promised Saviour; and this accounts

clearly for the standing memorial of the covenant of redemption in "the CHERUBIM *of glory*" from the time of the fall to the advent of Christ. But even now, it is not unnecessary to have recourse to the record and its hieroglyphic, with a view to personal comfort, and to the ulterior objects of the Divine purpose not yet accomplished. The unbelief of our own hearts will fully justify the manner in which it has pleased God, in the riches of his grace and the plenitude of his wisdom, to confirm the designs of his mercy.

Let me, also, request my friend to remark how the blessings of the covenant are spoken of in Scripture, with respect to the manner of their conveyance to their favoured objects. They are spoken of under the *notion of* "a *promise*," a free unfettered grant. See Gal. iii. 17, and Heb. vi. 13, &c. They are described as "the sure mercies of David,"—the mercies *of David*, because they were to be vested in Him who is David's Son and Lord, as the trustee for his redeemed,—the *sure* mercies of David, because they are secured to "all the seed" by virtue of the antemundane covenant, of which we have been speaking; a covenant made, not between God and man, or founded on conditions to be fulfilled by man, as a guilty helpless sinner, but between the Persons of Jehovah, one of whom as man, and in the nature of man, was to fulfil the conditions required. "It (the penalty of sin)

was exacted; and He (the surety) was made answerable." (Isai. liii. 7, *Lowth's Translation.)* The promises by which the blessings of redemption are conveyed, are said to be "all Yea and Amen in Christ Jesus." He is the surety of the "better covenant," viz. than that revealed at Sinai; which better covenant is that of unmixed grace revealed to Adam, renewed to Abraham, and perfected in Christ. Nay, Christ himself is called the "covenant of the people," meaning, perhaps, the sacrifice by which the covenant was sanctioned. (Comp. Gen. xv. 17, &c.)

If, my friend, we feel what all believers have felt, the baneful influence of unbelief in our own souls, we shall understand the reasons of the Divine conduct in all the various methods by which the provisions of grace have been published and confirmed. We shall not ask where was the necessity for all the ceremonial apparatus of the law, for all the diversified figures of the prophetic writings, or for the multiplied modes in which the great transaction is described in the New Testament Scriptures. We shall gladly make use of every aid afforded us for strengthening our faith and confirming our hope.

From the whole view which we have taken of redemption one comfortable inference is perfectly clear, *viz.* that its blessings flow freely to the lost children of men. "We are justified *freely*" by the grace of the ALEIM "through the redemption

that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." The meritorious conditions, on which the communication of those blessings was suspended, have been fulfilled by our Divine ALUE: He bore the *curse* and obeyed the precept of the violated law. He is the trustee in whose hands the stupendous benefit is vested; so that "eternal life is *the gift of God* through Jesus Christ our Lord." Out of his fulness it is our privilege to receive grace corresponding with the grace that is vested in Him. We ask not, "*May* we make use of the material light which the sun sheds around us for the benefit of all?" It would be the essence of folly to shut our eyes and refuse ourselves the use of it. We ask not, "*May* we inspire the air into our lungs, which is necessary to the existence and continuance of animal life?" We cannot entertain a doubt whether it was intended for the purpose or not. Now that "Light of life," and that sanctifying Spirit, of whom the material light and spirit are Scriptural emblems, are benefits equally gratuitous. No question need be made whether we may believe in Christ to the salvation of our souls, or whether we may ask with confidence for Divine influence to enable us so to believe. We may, without hesitation, contemplate all that the covenant of the ALEIM has provided, all that the blood of the ALUE has purchased, all that we are capable of enjoying here or hereafter, as made over to us

in and with our atoning surety: we may open our hearts and inspire freely and largely that blessed influence, on which spiritual life, motion, and capacity of enjoyment, depend. In thus believing the "testimony that God hath given of his Son," we concur in the eternal purpose of JEHOVAH ALEIM, who has declared that he willeth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn and live.

I am, my dear friend,

Truly your's,

LETTER XXII.

THE ARK OF NOAH, A TYPE OF SALVATION BY CHRIST.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

"GOD created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him:" Gen. i. 27. This image consisted mainly* in "righteousness and true holiness; or, in a resemblance of the moral perfections of Jehovah his Creator. It was not long, however, that man retained this glory of his nature; for by yielding to the temptation of Satan, and transgressing the commandment that was given him, he deprived himself of this Divine similitude, and rendered himself the child of the Devil. "Earthly, sensual, and devilish," are the epithets by which the Scripture stigmatizes the

* Man is spoken of by St. James as still bearing "a similitude of God." Chap. iii. 9. See Letter VI. The *moral* image of God in which man was created is entirely lost, as appears by the necessity of his being created anew in it: "The *new* man is after God, created in righteousness and true holiness." Eph. iv. 24. But something remains which St. James calls "a similitude of God," the retention of which aggravates, and, indeed, constitutes the offence of those who are guilty of cursing, or imprecating evil on, their fellow men.

natural state of fallen man. The baleful poison of the old Serpent, instantly on the fall, spread itself through our whole nature, and its dismal effects soon became apparent.

In tracing the history of man from its origin, we are soon brought to an event, the report of which is enough to chill the warm fluid which circulates through our arteries and veins, and to arrest its progress. For soon after two other persons, besides the common parents of mankind, existed, the one became the murderer of the other. And in following the clew which the narrative affords (concise indeed, but sufficient for the intended purpose) we find the posterity of the fratricide proceeding to progressive stages of iniquity, and, by mingling with the better race of Seth, corrupting them; till at length Divine patience was, (to speak after the manner of men) exhausted, "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart was only evil and that continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth." Chap. vi. 5, 6. In this and several other passages of Scripture, wherein God is said to repent, or change his mind, the meaning is that "He acts in such a manner as *men* do when they repent or alter their designs, and consequently changes his method of proceeding, though in truth He *changes not*," but the change is in his

creatures: for "God is not a man that he should lie, nor the son of man that he should repent."* Thus we read, 1 Sam. xv. 11, that it repented the Lord that he had "set up Saul to be king" over Israel: yet in the 29th verse of the same chapter it is said that "The Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent; for he is not a man that he should repent." So we likewise read, Jonah iii. 10, that God saw the works of the Ninevites that they turned from their evil way, and God repented of the evil that he had said he would do unto them, and he did it not." The word does not imply a change of *mind*, but a change of *acting*, in consequence of a change of *circumstances*; and, therefore, expresses a truth which is liable to no objection. In like manner, in the case now before us where it is said that "it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at the heart," we know that nothing unforeseen by Divine prescience had occurred, nothing unprovided for by Divine compassion. The plan of redemption had been before contrived, and before revealed. The increase of infidelity, the growth of error, and the abounding of excess, were natural results of the innate depravity of the human heart. Of that depravity the murder of Abel was the first overt act; but that instance of fratricide was but the

* Num. xxiii. 19.

first fruits of an abundant and awful harvest of evil, which the now accursed soil soon produced and ripened.

Mankind having generally apostatized from the faith and worship of God, and having filled the earth "with violence,"—enormities of every hideous kind,—the determination of the Divine Mind to sweep the whole earth with the besom of destruction was made known to his servant Noah, who, with his family, was preserved through Grace, from the general pollution, and enabled to hold fast the hope of salvation which on the fall was revealed to Adam, maintained by tradition and new revelations of its nature among the antediluvian patriarchs, and explained by the rites of sacrificature which had been Divinely instituted for this purpose. Of Noah the sacred record testifies that he was "a just man," justified as Abel had been before, and as Abraham afterwards was, through faith in the promised seed of the woman; "perfect in his generations," distinguished among his cotemporaries by the effect of sanctifying grace on his heart; and that he "walked with God, in a course of spiritual fellowship with Him and of holy obedience to His will." Ver. 9.*

* Both the participles here used, צדיק and תמים, have the hiphil ' after the second radical, implying, as I conceive that the effects which the participles describe were not naturally inherent in the patriarch, but derived. And it is to be remarked that

In the first general destruction of the human race there was a remnant saved from the catastrophe as there will be also at the second. For the preservation of the faithful few, consisting of eight persons, the God of mercy provided previous to the deluge. With a view to this, Noah was directed to build an ark (for the construction of which directions were given him by God Himself) wherein he and his family, together with a sufficient number of every species of animals, might, under Divine protection, outlive the storm, and re-people the earth, when it should be purged from its present impious race of apostates. Accordingly, "by faith Noah, being warned of God, of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." Heb. xi. 7.

That we are justified in considering this transaction among the illustrations of the great salvation, to be found in the patriarchal dispensation, is sufficiently clear from the use which St. Peter has made of it. In his first Epistle (chap. iii. 18, &c.) he has furnished a clew to guide us in an application of the several circum-

the word which denotes the personal character of Noah, is in the reduplicate form, the second radical being doubled, intimating that the grace which he had received was of no common kind. He was a very holy man.

stances of the narrative to those spiritual facts and doctrines in which we are ourselves interested. He says, "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit; by which also he went and preached to the spirits in prison,* which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing; wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water. THE LIKE FIGURE WHEREUNTO† even baptism

* The different opinions which have been formed on this difficult passage may be found in Witsius's Œconomy of the Covenants, Vol. ii. *p.* 382; Pearson on the Creed; Burnet and Beveridge on the XXXIX. Articles; and Bp. Horsley's well known Sermon, &c. &c.

† "The like figure whereunto, &c." or, "*the antitype Baptism.* The word τυπος, *type*, denotes a thing that is so formed as to convey an exact image of itself, by impression on another substance capable of receiving the impression. In Scripture it signifies *a pattern*, according to which a thing is made. Thus the visionary tabernacle, shown to Moses in the mount, is called τυπος, *type* or *pattern*, because he was to make the material tabernacle exactly like it, Heb. viii. 5. In Scripture likewise τυπος, *a type*, signifies an example of moral conduct, to be followed or imitated, 1 Cor. x. 6, 11. The word αντιτυπος, *antitype*, denotes the thing formed in imitation of the *type* or *pattern*. Thus, Heb. ix. 24, the Mosaic tabernacles are called αντιτυπα, *antitypes* or *likenesses of the true tabernacle*, or habitation of the Deity, because they were formed according to the τυπος, *pattern* showed to Moses, which was considered as the true tabernacle.—Farther, because some remarkable persons and events, recorded in Scripture, were so

doth also now save us (not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

When St. Peter says, "the like figure *whereunto*," (or, the antitype *to which)* "Baptism doth now save us," what does the pronoun relative rehearse, or, in other words, to what is Baptism the antitype? Doubtless, the relative agrees with "water" in the immediate context, and indeed the word immediately preceding it. Noah and his family "were saved by *water*, the antitype to which, *baptism*, doth now save us" under the new dispensation. But wherein consists the correspondence which the Apostle has noticed between the type and the antitype? The same outward "means" were employed in both cases. The water which bore up the ark was to Noah "an outward and visible sign" of something beyond itself, and was "ordained" to be "the sign and seal" of that which it signified. That of which it was the means, the sign and seal, was the Divine protection, before engaged

ordered by God as to be fit emblems or representations of future persons and events, (see Gal. iv. 24.) These persons and events are called *types*, and the things which they represented or prefigured, are called *antitypes*. Thus Rom. v. 14, Adam is called τυπος, *the type* of Christ, who on that account is called *the second Adam*. Thus also the water of baptism is here called *the antitype to the water of the flood*." *Macknight on the Epistles*, on 1 Pet. iii. 31.

for the salvation of himself and his household. This was the thing signified, without which the means could have availed nothing.* The water was the the "means whereby" he "received" the promised boon of salvation and "a pledge to assure" him "thereof."

But what is it in the ordinance of baptism that answers to the thing signified by the water which bore up the ark of Noah. It is "not the putting away the filth of the flesh," which is all that water, applied to the body, can effect; "but the answer of a good conscience towards God." The effect on the heart in reconciliation with God, arising from the testimony of an enlightened conscience, is the salvation which is received now, and the pledge and anticipation of eternal salvation. Without this baptism cannot save.

But is there any correspondence between the ark which the waters of the deluge bore up, and in which Noah and his family were saved, and any thing in the antitypical salvation? Undoubtedly there is. We are saved efficiently "by the resurrection of Jesus Christ; who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God, angels, and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him." He, like the ark of Noah, passed through the waters of a deluge, a deluge of Divine wrath occasioned by sin, which must have proved

* See Bp. Burnet's Expos. of the 27th Article.

destructive to all mankind, had not his mediation been provided, and which will prove destructive to all who are not IN HIM, the only ark of safety. But the ark outlived the deluge, and rested at length, with its refugees within it, on Mount Ararat. In like manner, the Saviour rose from the many waters which threatened to overwhelm him, and will prove an ark of salvation to all who believe in his name, by landing them in safety on Mount Zion.

There seems to be something still further and deeper in the mystery of redeeming love, implied in this analogy. The deluge of water which drowned the world, and threatened with destruction the ark which rode triumphantly over its billows, was itself the means of security to Noah and his family by bearing that impenetrable structure on its tumultuated surface. The waves dashed against the typical ark, and doubtless often ran over it; but they could not sink it. Thus the wrath of God which will overwhelm all who are out of Christ, and which spent itself on Him without submerging Him, because his person was Divine and his atonement all-sufficient for the satisfaction of Divine justice, is itself overruled to promote the salvation of sinners who believe in him. "All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me." God caused to "meet on him the iniquity of us all." He was made answerable for its guilt; and by that act of infinite justice a

way was made for the revelation of mercy in the justification of the guilty.

Other parallel circumstances which may be traced between the type and antitype are many. The recital of a few of them will show still more fully the correspondence to which St. Peter has referred.

The occasion of providing the ark which Noah was commanded to build, was the sin of man. This had provoked Divine displeasure, and produced the irrevocable decree of excision.—"I will destroy man whom I have made from off the face of the earth." Awful determination! How great must be God's abhorrence of sin, which led to so extensive and tremendous a result! Similar statutes are on record concerning sinners in every age of the world. "The soul that sinneth shall die."—"The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God."—"The wages of sin is death."—"Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them." In these immutable decisions of the Divine will the whole posterity of Adam are involved. God however whose bowels of compassion yearn with pity over the fallen sons of men, has provided, as he did in the days of antediluvian wickedness, an hiding place for all who with penitent hearts repair to it. Sin, in both cases, is the meritorious cause which occasioned the necessity of such a

provision. And as surely as the threatening was carried into execution, in the former instance, by a deluge of water, so surely will it be, in the latter, by a deluge of fire; and none will escape but those who are previously lodged in the ark. For "as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the son of man be: for as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be." Math. xxiv. 37—39.*

The ark in which Noah and his family were saved, was contrived by Infinite Wisdom, so as to be perfectly accommodated to the important purpose for which it was built. The grand requisites in its formation were capaciousness and strength. Had the safety of Noah and his numerous associates in the ark, been left to the efforts of his own wisdom, even when forewarned of his danger, it is evident that his mind must have sunk into despair, and the wished for escape been abandoned. In like manner, the contrivance of the Gospel-Salvation is the result of infinite wisdom. No finite understanding could have laid such a plan: for the remission of sin and the justifica-

* See Faber's "Dissertation respecting Christ's prophecy delivered from the Mount of Olives, as immediately connected with the period of the 1260 days."

tion of the offender, in a way not only consistent with the justice and the truth of God, but highly honourable to both, must have proved, to the intellect of men and angels, an utter impossibility. The antitypical ark is so capacious, that all who will may find admission into it; and it is built of such materials that it will outlive every storm, and infallibly secure its inhabitants from every danger that otherwise awaited them.† The door is now open, and the "preacher of righteousness," even of "the righteousness which is of faith," is commissioned to continue the proclamation, that "yet there is room;" and that our ark is sufficiently capacious and strong "to save to the uttermost" all who fly to its shelter. It was Divinely constructed for the express and exclusive purpose of receiving and securing from destruction all who, "being warned of God," and "moved with fear," seek the refuge it affords.

The assemblage of creatures, who were admitted into the ark of Noah, may fitly represent the various characters of those who find salvation in our Lord Jesus Christ. Some of all sorts

† "Thou shalt pitch it within and without with pitch." Gen. vi. 14. כפר the *bitumen* with which the ark was covered, is the word which is elsewhere often used for *atonement, expiation, appeasement:* and with a feminine termination signifies *the lid* or *covering* of the ark in the Mosaic tabernacle, and afterwards in the Temple, in allusion to which St. Paul, speaking of Christ, says, "He is *the propitiation* for our sins."

were received. Animals, clean and unclean, found a refuge there. This distinction, as is well known, is used in the Prophetic Scriptures, to denote that of Jews and Gentiles. In the ark of redemption there is no exclusive enactment respecting Jew or Greek, Barbarian, Scythian, bond or free. None were rejected by Noah on account of their nature or previous qualities and instincts. The door was set open; and the lion and the bear received as hearty a welcome, as comfortable accommodation, and as full security, as the useful ox or the harmless sheep. Thus, in Christ Jesus, all who are cordially disposed to seek salvation in his name, are equally welcome to it, and sure of obtaining it. Here the pious Thyatyrian Lydia, and the adulterous woman of Samaria, meet on equal ground. Both needed salvation, and both found it: the dying thief and the devout centurion; the bloody Manasseh and he who, touching the righteousness of the law, was blameless,—all stand on a level as sinners and as saved by grace. None can be saved but by entering through the same door; and all who so enter are eternally secure. "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out," was, as it were, inscribed over the door of Noah's receptacle for perishing creatures, and was the rule by which his conduct was regulated. And the same inscription, in characters large and distinct, meets the eye of every returning sinner who ventures to

raise it in the hope of obtaining mercy in his time of need.

The influence by which Noah's refugees were collected in the ark, is the same with that by which sinners are gathered to Jesus Christ. In both cases the power of God is exerted. For it is evident that no rhetoric of Noah could have induced the stately lion, or the timid hare, to have entered into his ark. He might have invited and threatened, till every argument was exhausted, and till his tongue clave to the roof of his mouth, ere a single animal would have been induced to comply with his proposal. HE, the Almighty and Allgracious Being, who willed the salvation of a remnant of the various tenants of his world, by His own invincible influence, counteracted all their natural instincts, and effectually constrained them to flock to the receptacle which He, in his mercy, had prepared for them. In like manner, all those who come to the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, are drawn to Him by the energy of Almighty Grace. Thereby their natural propensities are overcome, and they are made willing in the day of God's power, according to the saying of our blessed Lord, "No man can come unto me, except the Father who hath sent me draw him;" and "all that the Father hath given me shall come to me."

The different manner in which the various animals must have come to Noah for admission

to his ark, may also afford us an instructive lesson. While the antelope and the eagle, instigated by their newly acquired instinct, hastened rapidly to their new habitation, the snail and the sloth may be supposed to have made their removal thither a very tedious journey. Yet all who were drawn at length came and were saved. So some among those whom the Spirit of God awakens to a concern about salvation, impelled by fear or won by love, concur at once in the Gospel-proposal, and fly without delay to the cross and are saved. While others, from a variety of natural character, or obstacles interposed by circumstances of education, station in life, or relative connexion, are more tardy in their spiritual motions, and are long before they arrive where only peace and safety can be found. "The *sloth* never leaves the tree in which it lives and on which it feeds, while any thing remains that can serve it for food. When destitute of provisions above, it crawls slowly from branch to branch, in hopes of finding something still left, till it is obliged to encounter all the dangers that attend it below. Though it is formed by nature for climbing a tree with great pain and difficulty, yet it is utterly unable to descend. It therefore is obliged to drop from the branches to the ground; and as it is incapable of exerting itself to break the violence of its descent, it drops like a shapeless heavy mass, and feels no small shock in the fall. Then, after

remaining some time torpid, it prepares for a journey to some neighbouring tree; but this of all migrations is the most tedious, dangerous and painful: it often takes a week in crawling to a tree not fifty yards distant: it moves with imperceptible slowness, and often baits by the way. All motions seem to torture it; and in every step it takes, it sets forth a most plaintive melancholy cry." * How lively a description of the manner in which some converts move from the Tree of Death, the world, when it fails to afford them comfort any longer, to the Tree of Life, Jesus Christ; of the shock which they receive by conviction of their lost condition; and of the tardiness, pain and difficulty with which, through the impediments of nature, they approach Him! The whole description seems capable of an instructive application, which the mind of my friend will easily make. But we return to the history of Noah, in order to observe that, as God suspended the flood till all were safely housed in the ark who were travelling towards it, however slow their progress; so all who are drawn to Christ, will be brought to Him before the last trumpet sounds, and "the door is shut." The feeblest and the weakest believer is as much the object of Divine care, as the strongest of them who fly to Him for succour.

* Goldsmith's Natural History, Vol. iv. *p.* 345.

Our personal danger is equally imminent and unavoidable as that of the contemporaries of Noah, except by a compliance with the Divine command, "Come thou into the Ark." All who disobeyed perished, without a single exception. The flood left no possibility of effecting an escape by any means which human invention could devise. The highest hill and the most stately cedar which adorned its summit, were soon overwhelmed, and those who had climbed them were ingulfed with them. The ark only survived the devastation. "Even so will it be in the end of the world."

The change which took place in the character of the creatures who were admitted into the ark, is another circumstance of coincidence between the type and antitype. There the lion lost his fierceness; the tiger and the leopard ceased to devour. While co-inhabitants of the ark, "the wolf dwelt with the lamb, and the leopard lay down with the kid, and the young lion and the fatling together." Therein "the cow and the bear fed together; and, perhaps, the lion ate straw like the ox." (Is. xi. 6—9. lxv. 25.) In like manner, "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new." By those who are IN HIM "all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies. and evil speakings, and all malice,"

are laid aside. (1 Pet. ii. 1.) There is, however, in the two cases this important difference; that, in the former, the suspension of ferocious instinct was temporary and unnatural; whereas, in the latter, the change is permanent, increases, and is a transformation of our very nature. In the former, the alteration was produced by restraining power; in the latter, it is produced by renewing grace.*

The provision which was made for the wants of the numerous inhabitants of Noah's extraordinary bark, both as to food and security from danger, is another speaking circumstance. Of the former there was an abundance, not of their own providing; the latter was complete, since the warring elements were unable to penetrate the Divinely constructed mansion. So also in Christ, our ark, "all fulness dwells." No want is felt; no evil can come nigh our dwelling. If the question be proposed to those who abide in Him, with a reference to past experience, "Lacked ye any thing;" the reply must be unanimous—"NOTHING." Christ, like the ark of Noah, affords shelter, food, drink, clothing, and every other necessary and comfort of the spiritual life. Is it any wonder that those who partake of his benefits, should loudly sing of his praise?

* See Bp. Saunderson's admirable Sermon ad Populum on Gen. xx. 6.

My friend will again recollect, that all without the inclosure of the ark perished. The flood came and swept them all away; not one escaped. Most awful scene! By this circumstance an answer is afforded to an argument which some persons are apt to adduce against the doctrine of the Gospel, as if the scheme were uncharitable. The question is simply, whether the danger it describes be real or imaginary. If the former; let it be remembered that *true* "CHARITY rejoiceth in the truth." Was Noah uncharitable in the warnings and admonitions which he addressed to his contemporaries? No doubt, they thought so; but did the event verify their supposition? What were their views when "the windows of heaven were opened, and the fountains of the great deep broken up?" Then they began to entertain different thoughts of the preacher and his doctrine. —"SO SHALL ALSO THE COMING OF THE SON OF MAN BE." The CERTAINTY, NEARNESS, and SUDDENNESS of approaching destruction is the same in both cases. In both "a covert from the tempest" has been provided. Jesus "is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him;" and "there is no other name given under heaven among men, whereby we must be saved."

A question will perhaps arise in the mind of my friend, whether Noah was acquainted with the typical character of the temporal salvation

which he and his family experienced by means of the ark—whether he looked beyond it to its great antitype in the salvation of the promised seed? To what extent, as to the particulars of the analogy since disclosed by the great event, his knowledge extended, we cannot say; but we have infallible testimony that he was not ignorant of the spiritual salvation, nor a stranger to its enjoyment. For by faith—he became heir of the righteousness which is by faith; Heb. xi. 6.—that righteousness which St. Paul elsewhere characterizes, as "the righteousness of God," because God is its object,—"of faith," because it is by faith in Christ as its author that it is received and applied for justification. Noah by adoption became *heir* of this righteousness, and by faith realized its blessed results in peace of conscience and hope towards God. To suppose that when the exercise of faith is attributed to the patriarchs, that faith had no relation to Christ and salvation, is a vapid construction of the Apostle's meaning. It is inconsistent with and contrary to the design, and destroys the force of his argument.

My friend will see that other parallel circumstances in the two deliverances, besides those which are here brought forward, might have been produced. But enough has been said to justify the Apostle Peter's assertion that "baptism," or "the answer of a good conscience towards God,

by the resurrection of Jesus Christ," is the antitype of the wonderful deliverance experienced by the patriarch Noah and his family.

I am, my dear friend,

Truly your's,

LETTER XXIV.

THE POST-DILUVIAN COVENANT AND SACRIFICE.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

As "the church of the living God" was founded in a promise of redemption made to Adam immediately on his fall, and in typical sacrifice immediately instituted to illustrate that promised redemption; so, on its restoration after the Deluge, there was a renewal of the revelation of Jesus Christ, and of the illustrative memorial. The ark of deliverance was itself a figure* of the spiritual salvation which had been promised, and Noah a type of the Saviour who was to come and effect it. His name and his office furnished anticipations of HIM, by whom mankind were to be rescued from the deluge of wrath to come.

The new edition of the covenant of redemption (if I may so call it) which was furnished on the

* 1 Pet. iii. 21. "The like figure"—the *antitype of which*, &c. Ω και ημας αντιτυπον νυν σωσει βαπτισμα· The one had a correspondence with the other.

exit of Noah and his family from the ark, was again confirmed and illustrated by animal sacrifice; and a new symbol* was appointed, which had a primary relation to the temporal deliverance just before vouchsafed, but which had also an ulterior relation to the spiritual redemption of which the temporal deliverance was a figure. Both the temporal and spiritual redemption resulted from the covenant of peace, entered into in favour of fallen man by the adorable Persons of the Godhead, which covenant was revealed in the gracious name of ALEIM assumed by Jehovah in relation to it, and which it is the grand object of the holy volume to illustrate and confirm.

The new enunciation† of this covenant, after the flood, is thus expressed: "And the Aleim spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying, 'And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you and with your seed after you; &c.'" Gen. ix. 8, 9.

In order that we may take a comprehensive view of the meaning and intention to be ascribed to this re-established covenant, it is necessary to

* See Letter XXV.

† It is not said in what manner this revelation was made to Noah: but may we not suppose, with a high degree of probability, that the mode was similar to that which was employed in the discoveries of the Divine will before made to Adam, and afterwards to the other patriarchs,—by a personal manifestation of the Son of God? It does not appear to have been made by secret inspiration, but by words spoken to the outward ear.

consider the parties on whose behalf it was now revealed. "I establish my covenant *with thee, and with thy seed,* &c." Noah, as an eminent type of Christ, and a signalised link in the chain of connexion between Eve and her seed, the woman-born son who was to crush the Serpent's head, is first mentioned, as interested in it, and as the channel through which its blessings were to flow down to his posterity. The seed of the patriarch may be understood in a larger or a more restricted sense. In the larger sense all the external blessings of the covenant, the shell which hid the kernel of a spiritual salvation, were insured to all the natural posterity of Noah.* They, and with them the animal world, were secured by it from any future universal destruction till the economy of redemption should be closed; and provision was made for the eternal salvation of all who should seek after that salvation in the appointed way of Divine revelation. But a participation of that which is the kernel of the covenant, was limited to the spiritual seed of Noah,—to those who, through grace, should embrace the atonement it provided. This distinction may be traced through every period of the dispensation of mercy. It appears in that of which Abraham was the typical father. His

* Gen. viii. 21, 22.

seed according to the flesh are distinguished from those among his seed who were partakers of his faith. The former inherited from their relation to him many and great blessings; but to the latter was limited the blessing of eternal salvation. The case is much the same under the New Testament. Now this limitation is plainly pointed out in Noah's patriarchal benediction on Shem, (Gen. ix. 25—27.) occurring in his prediction of the future destinies of his descendants to the end of time,—a prediction of the most wonderful character, comprehending an epitome of all subsequent prophecy, and of all ecclesiastical history.

This prophecy of Noah should be considered as an elucidation of the covenant which was renewed to him and to his seed; and as it will not be irrelevant to our object to consider it more closely, I shall transcribe it, and offer you a few remarks on it.

"And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him. And he said,—Cursed be Canaan, a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren—And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.—God shall enlarge Japhet, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem, and Canaan shall be his (their) servant."—Who, I may ask, can read this prophecy, allowing it to

have been uttered at the time to which it is ascribed, and doubt the Divine inspiration of the book in which it is contained?

For an interpretation of this extraordinary revelation of future events, I must refer you to those learned men who have written expressly and largely on the subject;* I produce it only in explanation of the view which is to be taken of the covenant established with Noah and his seed.

It is well remarked by Bishop Newton, that this prophecy relates not so much to the sons of Noah "as to their posterity, the people and nations descended from them. He was not prompted by wine or resentment; for neither the one nor the other could infuse the knowledge of futurity, or inspire him with the prescience of events which happened hundreds, nay thousands of years afterwards. But God willing to manifest his superintendance and governance of the world," (and *I* should add, to shed further light on his covenant of mercy;) "endued Noah with the Spirit of prophecy, and enabled him in some measure to disclose the purposes of Divine providence towards the future race of mankind."

Keeping my present object closely in view, I shall not notice the verbal criticisms to which the

* See particularly *Fabricius de prophetiâ Noachi,* in his *Christologia,* Diss. iii; and Bp. Newton on the Prophecies, Diss. i.

prophecy has given rise with respect to the substitution of Canaan the son for Ham his father; nor shall I inquire into the fulfilment of the curse on their descendants. I only mark the limitation of the great patriarchal blessing of the Messiah to the family of Shem, and the subsequent admission of Japhet to a participation of its spiritual benefits. Jehovah calls Himself the Lord God (JEHOVAH THE ALEIM) of Shem, and promises that in the progress of the accomplishment of his purposes, he would dwell in the tents of Japhet.

That the prediction of the ALEIM being the ALEIM of Shem had relation to the covenant of redemption, will appear from the renewal of the covenant, when God revealed Himself to Abraham. "I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee in their generations, for an *everlasting* covenant; to be a God (ALEIM) to thee and thy seed after thee."* (Gen. xvii. 7.)

* Heideggerus verò, *Histor. Patriarch. Tom.* 2. *Exercit.* 7. *sect.* 7. hoc modo scribit, et quam Theologicè! *Quâ promissione* (loquitur autem de illâ quâ Deus promittit Abrahamo se *ei futurum in Deum*) *nihil amplius,* inquit, *illustriusve excogitari potest. Adeo ut meritò in eâ S. Chrysostomus collocaverit το κεφαλαιωμα των αγαθων* summum bonorum omnium. *Ad ejus vero intelligentiam quatuor potissimum in antecessum notanda sunt. Primum quod promissio hæc facta sit Abrahamo ejusque semini, utrique peccatori, et ob peccatum naturâ iræ divinæ obnoxio. Idque puto ανεξαγωνων. Secundum, quod peccatori Deus esse in Deum aliter non possit, quam remittendo ei peccatum, adeoque*

From other editions of the covenant as revealed to Abraham, we learn that its principal feature was the promise of the universal Benefactor; "In thy seed" (which St. Paul tells us was Christ) "shall all nations of the earth be blessed." From a comparison of what is said of the Lord God of Shem in this prophecy of Noah, with what is said in other Scriptures of the Messiah, in which he is spoken of as being both the author and object of blessing, I am led to infer that when Noah said, "Blessed be the Lord God of Shem," he had the promised seed of the woman, the MAN-JEHOVAH of Eve, immediately in his view; and that he not only predicted that Jehovah would, by a federal engagement, be "the shield and exceeding great reward" of himself and his descendants, in the line of Abraham, but also that Jehovah would become incarnate of the seed of Shem according to the flesh, in execution of the covenant of redemption thus revealed.

eum justificando. Etenim Deus peccatori amicus esse nequit, nisi peccato prius remisso, ne ipsi videatur similis, Psalm. l. 21. *Tertium, remitti peccatum non posse, nisi præstitâ satisfactione. Cujus quidem necessitas probari posset variis modis, a justitiâ Dei, lege operum, impotentiâ legis, ejusque maledictione, typis in V. T. futuram satisfactionem adumbrantibus, aliisque argumentis et testimoniis irrefragibilibus. Quartum denique, quod vox* אלהים Deus *in hac locutione sit relativa, uti ex multis Mosis et prophetarum locis constat, nec non ex disertis locis Hoseæ,* cap. i. and ii.. *Ubi ejus promissionis relatio imprimis ostenditur, ubi Deus populi sui, et populus Dei sui vicissim appellantur. Ita Hos.* 2 *v. ult. Fabricii. Christologia. p.* 121.

This benediction was renewed by Melchizedek,* the King of righteousness and peace; and its fulfilment is recorded by St. Peter (Acts iii. 26.) when he said to the seed of Abraham, "Unto you, *first*, God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to *bless* you, by turning every one of you from his iniquities." God revealed Himself as the Lord God of Shem, by the manifestations which he made of his favour to the patriarchs of that family, by the residence of the Shechinah in the tabernacle and temple, and finally by the incarnation of Jehovah, and the publication of his Gospel, in the first instance, among the Jews. The part of the prophecy which relates to Japhet,†

* Gen. xiv. 19.

† The following clause, "and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem," is capable of a double construction; for thereby may be meant either that *God*, or that *Japhet, should dwell in the tents of Shem; in the tents of Shem*, saith he, speaking according to the simplicity of those times, when men dwelt in tents and not in houses. They who prefer the former construction, seem to have the authority of the original text on their side; for there is no other noun to govern the verbs in the period, but *God*; there is no pronoun in the Hebrew answering to the *he* which is inserted in our English translation: and the whole sentence would run thus, 'God will enlarge Japhet, and dwell in the tents of Shem:' and the Chaldee of Onkelos also thus paraphraseth it, 'and will make his glory to dwell in the tabernacles of Shem.' They who prefer the latter construction, seem to have done it that they might refer the 27th verse wholly to Japhet, as they refer the 26th wholly to Shem: but the other appears to me the more natural and easy construction. Taken in either sense, the prophecy hath been most punctually fulfilled. In the

has been fulfilled by the publication of the Gospel among Gentile nations, and the formation of the Gentile church. But both parts of the prediction wait for their ultimate accomplishment, when "the Deliverer shall come out of Sion, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob;" and when the conversion of the Jews shall be "life from the dead" to the whole world.

That the covenant, as revealed to Noah, was, in its substance, the covenant of eternal redemption, further appears from the mention made of it before the flood. Gen. vi. 18. The deliverance of Noah and his family from the general destruction which the flood brought on mankind, and the promise that a flood of waters should never again destroy them, were, both of them, blessings resulting from the dispensation of grace revealed to man after his fall. The English word to *establish*, which is used in the several re-publications of the covenant, and which very justly

former sense it was fulfilled literally, when the Schechîna or Divine presence rested on the ark, and dwelt in the tabernacle and temple of the Jews; and when 'the Word who was with God and was God,' John i. 1. εσκηνωσεν, pitched his tent, *and dwelt among us*, ver. 14. In the latter sense it was fulfilled first, when the Greeks and Romans, who sprung originally from Japhet, subdued and possessed Judea and other countries of Asia belonging to Shem; and again spiritually, when they were proselyted to the true religion, and they who were not Israelites by birth, became Israelites by faith, and lived, as we and many others of Japhet's posterity do at this day, within the pale of the church of Christ. *Bp. Newton on the Prophecies. Diss.* I.

renders the original verb,* imports that these assurances given to Noah, and afterwards repeated to Abraham, &c, were renewed revelations of what had before existed.† This is confirmed by the sacrifice which accompanied the renewal, since that rite originated in the covenant of redemption, and cannot be separated from it, Christ the surety of that covenant being, as we shall presently see, the invariable antitypical object of every sacrific act. Moreover, as the faith of Noah and his seed in the assurance given them that there should never again occur a deluge of waters to destroy all flesh, was founded on the Divine promise, so that promise itself must have had its origin in some provision made for the forgiveness of sin, and the hope of everlasting salvation; for God must be just in all his dispensations of mercy,—and indeed, the deliverance of the world from destruction could be no further an act of mercy than as it was connected with the redemption and final salvation of the spiritual seed of Noah, for whose sake (as before for the sake of the woman's mystic seed) the promise was unconditionally made. The eternal salvation of that seed,—of Christ and his church,—is the object of Divine wisdom and goodness in the long preservation of the world from that ruin to

* מקים *Hiph. to cause to stand, to confirm;* so St. Paul, Gal. iii. 17.

† Gen. xv. 18. xvii. 7, &c.

which it is finally destined for the sin of man.* When that object is attained, when the spiritual temple is finished, and the last stone brought in with shoutings, "Grace, Grace unto it," then the scaffolding will be removed as no longer necessary or valuable.† This view of the covenant for temporal security revealed to Noah and his seed, is confirmed by the manner in which it is referred to by the evangelical prophet,‡ which I shall have occasion to mention more particularly in my next letter.

It must be evident, I think, that the comprehension of the irrational creatures in this covenant has, exclusively of any ulterior benefit to themselves, a primary relation to man. Their sufferings would have been lessened by repeated deluges; for, whether in a wild or domesticated state, they suffer through the penalty attached to the sin of man, or his own cruelty to them, more than could have been felt in the pang of dying, which, indeed, they must, in one way or other, have endured. To them, under the present circumstances of the world, suffering is unavoidable. But to the church of Christ their continued existence was necessary for food, for clothing, and for sacrifice till the great antitype of animal victims was offered on the cross. They are therefore included in the post-diluvian charter.

* See Is. vi. 13. † 2 Pet. iii. 5—7.

‡ Is. liv. 9, 10. Comp. Jer. xxxi. 35.

The reference which is made in the gracious declaration of Jehovah, (chap. viii. 21.) to the natural corruption of the human heart, greatly strengthens the view which I have taken of the covenant as revealed to Noah, and which I have considered as having had its basis in a previously existing and a previously revealed plan of spiritual and eternal salvation. The historian, after he had stated that "the Lord smelled a sweet savour" from Noah's typical sacrifice, adds that the Lord said in his heart, "I will not again any more curse the ground for man's sake," namely, by bringing another deluge of waters over all the earth; "for" (or rather, *although**) "the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth."†

* The particle כִּי often requires the sense of *although*, as may be seen in *Noldius*, who, among a great number of proofs, produces this verse of Genesis as one. See also *Glassii Phil. Sacr. p.* 606.

Onkelos has paraphrased the gracious declaration referred to consistently with the interpretation I have given of it. "When the Lord smelled the grateful odour, he said in his heart, I will not again desolate the ground on man's account, *although* the heart is evil from his youth."

† The extent to which the term *youth* is to be carried back, may be inferred from parallel passages which speak of the doctrine of original sin. Comp. Ps. li. 5. lviii. 3. Isa. xlviii. 8. The expression goes back to the earliest infancy of human nature. In this interpretation the Hebrew Rabbis concur, and it is confirmed by St. Paul when he says that "death hath passed upon all men, even on them who have not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression;" or, on those who were incapable of actual transgression. Figmentum malum

The total corruption of human nature had been previously assigned as the reason of the destruction to be effected by the deluge. Chap. vi. 5, &c. It seems to have been necessary that such a demonstration of the universality of that corruption, and of God's hatred of sin, should have been once given; but that demonstration having been made, God, in consideration of his covenant of redemption, and of the satisfaction to Divine justice which it provided by the vicarious atonement of the seed of the woman, promised that it should not be repeated during the progressive formation of his church, *although* the demerit of original sin and its desert of punishment would continue the same to the end, and always justify God in the destruction of his creatures.

In this declaration of Omniscience the doctrine of original sin is most clearly asserted. The term *youth* is to be extended to the earliest infancy of man, and the corruption which is natural to him affects the earliest motions of his

dicitur *dominium in hominem* exserere משעת יצירה *a tempore formationis. Gemar. Sanhedr. Cap.* xi. *Fol.* 91. *Col.* 2.—"It meaneth not only man's age, but infancy or child's age, as the word whence youth here is derived, is spoken of Moses when he was a babe, Exod. ii. 6. And we all are transgressors from the womb, Isa. xlviii. 8. Ps. li. 5. and lviii. 3. In Bereshith Rabbah (an Hebrew Commentary on this place) a Rabbine is said to be asked, *When is the evil imagination put into man?* And he answered, *From the hour that he is formed.*" *See Ainsworth on Genesis.*

mind: its contagion is universal and perpetual—the imagination, nay "*every imagination of the thoughts of his heart is only evil, and that continually.*" Chap. vi. 5. If words can be found that describe totality and perpetuity more strongly, let them be produced.*

I shall now request your attention to the sacrifices which Noah offered when he came out of the ark. This event took place in the 601st year of his life, on the 27th day of the 2d month, which has been computed to be the 18th of December, in the year of the world 1656. His abode in the ark had continued a year and ten days.

His first act was, as might be expected, a solemn recognition of the covenant of mercy, by virtue of which his own life and the lives of his family had been preserved, and on which his personal hopes and those of the future church were founded. He commemorated the promise of the expected Redeemer,† and made profession of his faith in Him, by the instituted rites of sacrificature. He built an altar, and offered on it the appointed types of the great sacrifice which was "foreordained before the foundation of the world."

* See the IXth Article and the Homilies of the Church of England, and especially that on the misery of man, *passim*.

† The Ο Ερχομενος of prophecy. Ps. cxviii. 26. Habakuk ii. 3. Comp. Matt. xi. 3.

Noah's victims were selected from the same class of animals which were afterwards prescribed by the levitical law. This distinction which was made before the flood, and probably from the time of the fall, between clean and unclean animals, as it could have had no relation to food before the use of animal food was granted to man, must have had an exclusive relation to sacrifice; and the preservation of seven individuals of every clean tribe, while only two of each species of the unclean were brought into the ark, does not appear to have had any other reason than a provision for the immediate performance of this rite. Therein the church was founded, when Adam and Eve were its only members; and in this rite it was re-founded, when, immediately after the destruction of the human race with the exception of eight persons, they constituted a seed which was to be productive of an abundant harvest, when the 144,000 from among the descendants of Abraham, and the great multitude that no man will be able to number from Gentile nations, shall have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of that Lamb of God, of whom Noah's sacrifice was the instituted prefiguration.

The sacrifices of Noah were what were afterwards called burnt-offerings or holocausts. In these, the animal having been divested of its skin and its entrails, the whole carcase was consumed

upon the altar. In other kinds of sacrifice a part was given to the offerer; but in this the whole was consumed. From the Hebrew term which the historian has used, it appears that Noah's sacrifices were whole burnt-offerings.*

That the sacrifices which Noah offered, were offered in expiation of sin, seems to be evident from various considerations. As his burnt-offerings are spoken of in the plural number,† it is not improbable that they were of different classes. They might include *thank-offerings*, or testimonies of gratitude for his late deliverance, as well as *sin-offerings*, or expiations of guilt. But as faith in the sacrifice of Christ has been, in all ages, essential to the acceptance of a sinner's person and services, I cannot suppose that the prescribed testimony of that faith was omitted by the patriarch of the second world. Indeed, the very act of consuming a victim in the fire of God's altar, implied, if the ordinance were understood, as doubtless it was, a confession on the part of the offerer that he considered his own life as the forfeit of transgression, and substituted the slain animal's life for his own. This was indicated in every burnt-offering, to whatever class it belonged. And I see no reason for doubting that the sacrifices of Noah were accompanied, according to the

* עלה, so called from its ascending in flame and smoke. LXX. Ολοκαρπωσιν.

† The Sam. 9 MSS. and the versions read עלות—plur.

prescribed rites of the Mosaic institute, with imposition of hands, as a token of a transfer of guilt from the offender to the vicarious victim. * The nature of Noah's sacrifices, as being of an expiatory character, is confirmed by the account given of their Divine acceptance. Jehovah, it is said, smelled a sweet savour from them, an expression which is transferred by St. Paul from the LXX. version of this place to the expiatory sacrifice of Christ, when he says that "Christ gave Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour." †

The *savour of rest* which Jehovah is said to have smelled from the sacrifices of Noah, and afterwards from those of the Levitical institute, must of course be understood in a figurative sense. The smell of a burning animal cannot literally be spoken of as sweet; and even, if the offering were accompanied by frankincense and other fragrant gums, these could afford no gratification to Him who has no bodily senses capable of receiving it. What then could this savour of perfect rest be but the typical satisfaction given to Divine justice by the prefigurative exhibition of Christ crucified, and the opening thereby made for the manifestation of mercy to fallen man? This typical

* See Levit. i. 4.

† Eph. v. 2. Οσμη ευωδιας. *LXX.* and *St. Paul.*

cause of Divine appeasement was realized when *He* cried "IT IS FINISHED," concerning whom Isaiah had predicted that Jehovah should be "well pleased for *His* righteousness sake," because He would "magnify the law and make it honourable,"* by paying its penalty and fulfilling its precept, according to the utmost demand it could make, for "the justification of the ungodly."

How rich and abundant are the proofs which we have found in the brief record which Moses has furnished of the restoration of the patriarchal church after the flood, that "Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, to day, and for ever!" Under every dispensation He has been the *Alpha* and the *Omega* of Divine Revelation and worship, the depository of grace, and the channel of its communication. St. Paul, speaking of Noah, has informed us that it was "by faith" that "Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." Heb. xi. 7. And he might have added on the same authority, if the conciseness of his memoirs would have admitted of addition, that it was "by faith" in the great atonement, which the Author of that righteousness was, in the fulness of

* Chap. xlii. 21.

time, to make upon the cross, that Noah offered the typical prefigurative sacrifices from which Jehovah "smelled a sweet savour;"—that it was "by faith" in Him, in whom and by whom the covenant of redemption in all its forms has been revealed and confirmed,—who is one of the ALEIM, the contracting parties in that covenant, and the surety for the fulfilment of all its conditions, (those which were required for the honour of the Lawgiver, and those also which the salvation of the sinner rendered necessary); that Noah obtained the comfort which he needed in looking forward to his own personal prospects and those of his posterity. It was through faith in Him who has "a rainbow round about his head *in sight like unto an emerald*," that Noah was enabled to comprehend the meaning of that Divinely appointed symbol, and to embrace the assurance of safety, temporal and spiritual, which it was instituted to afford him. It was by faith in the record of the promised Seed, whom it was probable that he saw with his own eyes in an anticipated human shape, that he predicted the future birth of the woman-born heir of all things, from the seed of Abraham in the line of his son Shem, to whom in the prospect of that inestimable privilege he assigned the rights of the patriarchal primogeniture.

The evidence which the history of Noah affords,

in relation to the existence of a Divinely instituted ceremonial law before the time of Moses, cannot but have struck the mind of my friend. We have therein renewed mention of sacrific rites as performed by Noah so soon as he had left the ark. We find an altar immediately built, and animal offerings laid and consumed on it in atonement for sin, and those animals of the same species which Abel had before offered, and to which sacrific victims were confined by the Mosaic code. The sacrifices which Noah offered are stated to have been acceptable to Jehovah, which was, perhaps, attested, as in the case of Abel and numerous other instances, by the usual token of Divine approbation, consumption by fire Divinely kindled. Whether the sacred tent of Adam, the existence of which has, I conceive, been rendered more than probable by a former letter, had been preserved in the ark or not, is unrecorded; but we learn that such a tent existed before Moses built the Tabernacle in the wilderness. And whether the first rainbow, after its appointment to be a token of the covenant, did not appear in the cloud of glory which was the usual symbol of the Divine Presence, and from which, on other occasions, the fire proceeded which consumed the sacrifices, is a subject for meditation which may, without detriment to the analogy of faith, engage the pious mind. But the federal

aspect of the rainbow will be the subject of my next communication. In the mean time, I remain

Your's,

LETTER XXV.

THE RAINBOW A SYMBOL OF DIVINE MERCY.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

BEFORE the world had existed two thousand years, it pleased God who made it to destroy all its inhabitants with the exception of eight persons. The cause of this catastrophe was the universal corruption, both of faith and practice, which prevailed among them. The means which he chose to employ was a deluge of waters.

In the exercise of judgment God, however, remembered mercy. His grace had preserved one family from the deluge of corruption, with a view to its preservation from the deluge of destruction. And as he could be at no loss for the means of punishing sin; so he could be at none for the means of saving his servants.

It was not unnatural for those who had been preserved from the universal catastrophe, in so extraordinary a manner as that which had been the means of security to Noah and his family, and still less for their posterity, to fear lest, on some future occasion, a similar vengeance might be taken on his sinful creatures by the Sovereign Disposer of all events. The fullest assurance,

therefore, was necessary to the peace of mankind under circumstances of so alarming a nature as a consciousness of demerit, and a recollection, accompanied with evidence every where to be found, of the effects which human depravity had once produced.

That gracious Being who had, both by word and deed, so mercifully provided for the comfort of our guilty first parents immediately after their fall, in the paradisiacal promise and the institutions connected with it; discovered the same tender consideration for the second parents of mankind on their coming out of the ark. A promise was made that "all flesh should not any more be cut off by the waters of a flood," and this promise was conveyed in the form of a solemn engagement to the survivors of the antediluvian world and their posterity, and to every living creature of the various tribes that had escaped from the universal ruin and to their progeny throughout all generations. But this promise and covenant, in which the ALEIM were the only contracting parties (for no notice is taken of any mutual stipulation on the part of Noah or his sons, and no condition of its fulfilment was required of them) might in future ages be called in question, as we know that every other part of Divine Revelation has been; and, therefore, it pleased God to appoint a magnificent natural phenomenon, which had probably been

often visible before the flood, to be from thence-forward a voucher for the truth of the promise he had made. As this natural phenomenon was not arbitrarily chosen for the purpose of sustaining faith in the Divine promise, but was, in its own physical character, adapted to the important end to which it was appointed; and as it had also a symbolical reference to a more stupendous salvation than that which Noah and his family had experienced; its history will form a suitable subject for another letter in the series which you have requested me to write to you.

In calling your attention to this subject, I shall, first, lay before you the transaction as it is recorded in the ninth chapter of Genesis; and, then, offer you a few remarks for its illustration, following the Scriptural direction by "comparing spiritual things with spiritual," or one part of the Sacred Volume with others.

After the promise which I have already cited, the ALEIM added, "This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you, and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations. I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and all the earth. And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud. And I will remember my covenant which is between me and

you, and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth. And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth."

Such is the narrative which Moses has given us: and it would not be easy to determine whether it displays more of the wisdom or goodness of Him whom it introduces as the covenanting friend of man. This act of His loving kindness corresponds with the general tenour of his dispensations, in all of which he has employed the machinery of nature to display his own perfections, and to contribute to the happiness of his people. Instruction, thus conveyed, makes an abiding impression on the mind, strengthens conviction when it has been produced, and revives it when it has been weakened. These are the effects which the sacraments of the antediluvian and post-diluvian dispensations, of the Levitical and Christian periods, were intended and calculated to produce.

"The Rainbow," says Sir Isaac Newton, "never appears but when it rains in the sunshine, and may be made, artificially, by spouting up water, which may break aloft, and scatter, into

drops, and fall down like rain; for the sun shining upon these drops certainly causes the bow to appear to a spectator standing in a true position to the rain and sun: this bow is made by refraction of the sun's light in drops of falling rain."

This philosophical definition of the phenomenon furnishes a key to the propriety with which the symbol was chosen:—or, might I not venture to say, after what has been noticed in former letters, to the main object for which, in the combination of causes and effects, the rainbow was produced? For however its beauty may charm the corporeal eye, its symbolic character and appropriation must convey infinitely more satisfaction to the eye of faith. After what Noah and his family had witnessed, every cloud must have reminded them of the danger to which, independently of Divine goodness, the earth was again exposed; and the heavier the cloud, the greater the cause of alarm. But the bow appearing in the cloud would be light in the midst of darkness, hope to counteract despair; and the darker the token of vengeance, the brighter would be the splendour of the token confirming the covenant of mercy.

In applying the definition of the rainbow which I have quoted, I must anticipate what will be again referred to, in a further illustration of the symbol as noticed under the New Testament

dispensation. The colours of the rainbow are produced by a "refraction of the sun's light in drops of rain." And how is Divine mercy manifested to us, whether as it appeared in the redemption of man from the deluge of water, or in that spiritual redemption from the eternal wrath of God for which we are directed to look to the cross of Christ? Is it not by a refraction of that light which flows from "the Sun of righteousness," against the dark cloud of vengeance which threatened us with destruction? Is it not connected with that vengeance, so that it could not have been revealed in any other way than as opposed to it, and indeed as arising from it? In that glorious object which is presented to the eye of faith, "mercy and truth meet together, righteousness and peace kiss each other." Here "*mercy* rejoiceth against *judgment*," (James ii. 13.) while a display of both is necessary to the happiness of the spectator who must be humbled by a discovery of judgment, before he can be refreshed by a vision of mercy. In order that he may understand the emblem, he must "stand in a due position to the rain and sun."

The covenant revealed to Noah respecting the temporal safety of the future generations of mankind, appears to be a sort of clause in the more general covenant made between the persons in Jehovah, and implied in the gracious title, ALEIM, securing the salvation of penitent sinners

through the mediation of our Lord Jesus Christ, of which general covenant the first copy was published in Paradise immediately after the fall. For all temporal salvation arises out of the provision made for eternal salvation by pardon of sin and the sanctifying influence of the Holy Ghost. The ark of Noah is therefore employed by St. Peter in illustration of the baptismal sacrament. (1 Pet. iii. 21.) And in both cases, the revelation made to Adam and that to Noah, the token or symbol was substantially the same. In both it was a combination of the subordinate symbolic Trinity of Nature, representing the actions of the DIVINE TRINITY in the work of redemption. The visible security given to Adam for the fulfilment of the promise made to him and all his penitent posterity, was, as I conceive has been proved, a cone of flame in the midst of a cloud; (comp. Gen. iii. 24, with Ezek. i. 4.) and the exhibition made to Noah, which is still continued in the heavens, was "light refracted from a cloud."

There is an allusion to the token of the covenant established with Noah and his family, contained in the prophecy of Isaiah, (chap. liv. 9.) which, I think, confirms the connexion I have supposed to exist between that covenant and the covenant of redemption. Jehovah, for the purpose of comforting his church under the pressure of affliction, says, "For a small moment have I

forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy upon thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer. For this is as the waters of Noah unto me. For as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee." As the church addressed in this context is distinguished from the Gentiles, whom it is to "inherit;" I conclude that the church of Israel is the object of these consolatory promises. And as the promises refer to a period after which Divine displeasure is to cease for ever, it seems unquestionable that their ultimate fulfilment is to be looked for in Israel's yet future restoration. But the circumstance to which I would more particularly direct your attention, is the manner in which these promises are confirmed. They are conveyed under the notion of a covenant, and are a section of that covenant of redemption and grace, of which the revelation to Noah made also a part.

There is also another reference to the rainbow, which connects the symbol of the covenant given

to Noah with the covenant of general redemption. It is found in Psalm lxxxix. 38: His throne *(viz.* that of the Messiah) shall be established for ever as the moon, and as *the faithful witness* in heaven." The copulative between the two distichs of the verse seems to imply that two distinct comparisons are intended; and, if so, what other object of comparison besides the moon, can the Spirit of revelation be supposed to introduce but the rainbow, "the faithful witness" of Divine faithfulness frequently exhibited "in heaven" to the eyes of all mankind. This symbol thus appears to have a higher and more generally interesting office assigned to it, than that of assuring us that no general deluge of waters shall again destroy the earth.

This will be further established, when it is recollected that, both in the Old and New Testament, the Mediator of the covenant of redemption is represented as having a rainbow for his crown. This representation, joined as it is with many other features of resemblance, proves the identity, as to the subject and intention, of the visions of Ezekiel and those of St. John. (Comp. Ezek. i. 26—28, with Rev. iv. 3, and x. 1.) The subject of both is the glory of our Redeemer; and the object is the confirmation of our faith in Him as the all-sufficient Saviour of our souls.

But, before I proceed to lay before you these New Testament references to the token of Noah's

covenant, I must observe, that both that covenant, and the general covenant of redemption, are represented as founded in sacrifice for sin.* The former is thus introduced to our notice, Gen. viii. 20, &c; "And Noah builded an altar unto the Lord, and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl,† and offered burnt-offerings on the altar. And the Lord smelled a sweet savour" ("*marg.* a savour of rest" or appeasement. Comp. Eph. v. 2.); and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again any more curse the ground

* That solemn covenants were, of old, frequently if not always, accompanied and sanctioned by animal sacrifices, both among believers and heathens, is too well known to require any proof; and "the offering these sacrifices, and passing through the parts of the divided victim, was symbolically staking their hopes of salvation on their performance of the conditions on which the sacrifice was offered." It was *acting* the adjuration of an oath, "*So help me God.*" In condescension to human infirmity, it pleased Jehovah, the God of Abraham, to confirm his engagement to Abraham and the lost world in the same way. See Gen. xv. 9—18, where the symbols of the Divine presence passed between the parts of the divided victims, whereby Jehovah, pledging as it were his own existence for the fulfilment of his great promise, exhibited to the eye "the oath which he sware to Abraham." For instances of heathen imitation, see *Homer, Virgil, Livy,* &c. Hence the Latin phrases *ferire, icere, percutere fœdus*; (see *Ainsworth's* Dictionary on the word *fœdus)*—and hence the corresponding Hebrew phrase, כרת ברית. See Letter XXIX.

† The importance of typical sacrificature could not have been more strongly pointed out, than by Noah's offering on his altar one, or more, of every clean animal and fowl, as will appear when it is considered that seven only of every species had been preserved in the ark.

for man's sake." Then follow, in chap. ix, the Divine blessing that was pronounced on Noah and his family, and a revelation of the covenant of which the rainbow was the token. Here, then, a connexion between the typical sacrifices of Noah, and the blessing, is clearly established. And in like manner, the general dispensation of mercy is called the "New covenant in the blood of Christ," referring to the channel in which Divine mercy flows, and the way in which it has been secured to us. How delightful is it to trace the uniformity of the Divine procedure, the relation which one part of Scripture bears to another, and the evidence afforded in all for the confirmation of our faith and hope!

Indeed, with what view could God reveal to man a covenant of mercy, engaging that he would no more destroy him from off the face of the earth till the final conflagration,—but with an ultimate reference to an effectual atonement and an everlasting salvation? There would have been no mercy displayed in the preservation of human life, and the consequent multiplication of our species, had there been no redemption provided for the souls of penitent sinners, by His sacrifice to which all previous atonement, whether in the patriarchal or levitical period, pointed. Independently of this expiation, the prolongation of human life would have led only to an increase of guilt and punishment; and the

multiplication of our species must have produced an increase of weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth.

The vision of the Apocalypse to which I have referred you, is recorded in the 4th chapter. The throne of grace, symbolised by the mercy-seat in the most holy place, appears therein as the seat of the Divine Majesty, and around it St. John saw the hieroglyphic "rainbow, in sight like unto an emerald." The allusion to the token of God's covenant with Noah is distinctly marked in Ezekiel's corresponding vision, where, after describing (chap. i. 27) the man in glory, and the brightness that was round about him; the prophet adds, "As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the bow that was round about." "This was the appearance" (or a vision) "of the likeness of the glory of the Lord." On these corresponding visions, Vitringa, in his exposition of the Apocalypse, has the following remarks. "These words may suggest to us this view of the subject; that God, as he was seen by Ezekiel sitting on a throne, was on every side surrounded by great splendour of Majesty and Glory, as if he had been encircled by a rainbow. But it may be questioned, to which among the colours of the rainbow Ezekiel principally referred, the green or the red? For the rainbow is composed of both; and a reader of Ezekiel might be led to think of red or bright yellow, which, is

particularly manifest among those colours; but the rainbow which St. John saw surrounding the throne of God, was of that colour which is most proper and natural to it, namely, *green*, the colour of the emerald. Pliny, in speaking of this stone, observes, that "its aspect is more grateful than that of others, on many accounts; in proof of which, the delight which we experience in the verdure of fields and trees, may be adduced. And as the green of the emerald is stronger than that of any other object, the eye dwells on it with greater pleasure. Besides, in contemplating an assemblage of precious stones, the emerald contents the eye without producing satiety."

"When John saw a rainbow surrounding the throne, we are, I conceive, to understand him as saying, that the King Himself whom he saw sitting on the throne had his head encircled with a rainbow; so that the rainbow had the appearance of a crown encompassing the head of the august royal Personage who, in vision, was presented to the mind of St. John. This is certainly the description, afforded us in a subsequent context of the Apocalypse, chap. x. 1, of the mighty angel whose venerable appearance is pourtrayed after a similar manner: "And a rainbow was above his head." The rainbow, therefore, had here the appearance of a crown,* surrounding the

* Milton's idea of the Rainbow, as being the image of an open and complacent eye-brow, when he says,

head of this most mighty and majestic angel: and the rainbow was celebrated by this very name (viz. that of a regal crown) among the ancients, as being the most significant emblem of empire and dominion, and is so spoken of in the history of Augustus. And, indeed, nothing can be more certain than that the rainbow (although both the Hebrews and the Romans regarded it on account of its *apparent* resemblance of a bow) forms a complete circle in the heavens, the half of which only being visible in our hemisphere, it appears to us a bow, while in reality it is not a bow but a circle. This, I conceive, is particularly worthy of notice, because, without it, we shall be unable to penetrate the mystery of that heavenly circle which God appointed to be a sacrament of his grace to the patriarch Noah. For that circle, formed in the shape of a crown, leads us to contemplate that kingdom of God in which mercy and grace, mingled with justice and sanctity, are the governing principles. Since therefore the Rainbow exhibits chiefly to our view *two** predominant colours, the *green*† and the *red*, which are intermixed in the centre; the red aptly symbolizes the justice, sanctity, and severity of God,

"Distended as the brow of God appeared,"
is finely poetical, but it has no Scriptural sanction. The Scriptural notion is that of a royal Diadem.

* Subsequent discoveries have proved that there are "*three* primary colours in the unity of the light."—*Jones.*

† See Encyclopedia Britannica. Art. Chemistry.

while the green, in direct opposition to it, as aptly symbolizes his clemency and grace. But the colour of green is predominant in the Rainbow,* as, in truth, Divine grace and clemency prevail, in the government of this world, over the justice and severity of God. Such was the covenant made with the whole race of the descendants of Noah, securing to them the exercise of clemency and compassion. But the mystery of that Testament and covenant is deeper still. For both the one and the other are founded in that gracious Testament, which God made, before the world was, in Christ Jesus, on behalf of his elect people who should thereafter believe in Christ Jesus, and embrace the terms of the true covenant of grace, entered into with fallen man on the basis of that testament. For all the long-suffering which God exercises in the world, supposes and is connected with that grace which he offers and performs to his elect in the true covenant of grace. The covenant therefore which was made with the descendants of Noah, was altogether of a symbolical nature, and the Rainbow itself, in the fullest sense of its symbo-

* "*Cæruleum* et *virentem* vocat Ammianus, iridem satis accuratè describens, eique vindicans quinque colorum species, luteum, flavescentem vel fulvum, puniceum, purpureum; denique cœruleo concretum et *viridi*. Sed viridis prævalet: cæteri colores ad *rubrum* dilutius vel fortius transparentem facile referuntur. *Vide illum, Lib.* xx. *Cap.* xi. 1.

lical character, is to be referred to that kingdom of grace, which God, in the economy of grace, after the most striking manner, exhibits in his Son Jesus Christ. Since in this kingdom, as it is manifested in the present dispensation of the church, grace and clemency so reign, that grace as it were absorbs justice; hence truly that crown of the rainbow, with which God as King is encircled, appears wholly of the colour of green, and indeed, as it is here described, of the most vivid green, that of the emerald, and of the most delightful and reviving aspect. Such is that grace which God dispenses to his elect in the present era of the church.

Such were the sentiments of a most able commentator, not of the Hutchinsonian school, on the symbolical object of the Rainbow as introduced to notice in the book of Genesis and in the Revelation of St. John. And may it not be remarked, in addition to what he has said, that the Rainbow, being a combination of colours so mixed as to produce the loveliest effect; affords the most affecting emblem that can be conceived of the attributes of Deity, the sun of the spiritual heavens, so harmonized in the covenant of grace that an object is thereby presented to the soul, whose eyes have been Divinely capacitated for contemplating it, which will be for ever a source of unspeakable delight, and a theme for everlasting admiration and grateful thanksgiving?

But the prevailing colour of the rainbow is green; and hence that which was seen by Ezekiel and St. John, surrounding the head of the glorified Jesus, is compared to that of the emerald. And though, in the covenant of grace, or in the Gospel which is its record, every Divine attribute has its due place and proportionate honour; yet mercy shines there with prevailing lustre. If we consult our own state of mind, this first claims attention, and attracts the regard of faith. If we consult the Scriptures, this has the prominent place in the circle of revealed truth. This softens, if I may so speak, the other attributes, and renders them grateful to the enfeebled but enraptured eye of penitent devotion in fallen man.

The bow is placed where it may be seen by all, and is calculated, by its position in the heavens, to remind us of the gracious command of Him whose head is encircled with it, "Go *into all the* world, and preach the Gospel *to every creature*." That Gospel owes its origin (I repeat a remark already made) to the very clouds of wrath, which poured their fury on Him who was made a curse for us. By him the curse is converted into a blessing, and the evidence of inviolable justice becomes evidence of abounding grace. Rom. v. 20, 21.

I have hitherto omitted to mention the additional evidence, in support of the triunity of the Godhead, which the doctrine of the Rainbow

symbolically affords.* "In optics," says a modern Philosopher, "we have *three* primary colours in the *unity* of the Light." Is it any wonder if every natural science should be found to bear its testimony in support of a doctrine which is essential to human happiness, but of which the human mind can form no ideas without some images of its truth and character exhibited in things which are subject to our understandings? We receive the doctrine on the testimony of God; but we are thankful for any scriptural illustrations which afford us conceptions of Triunity, while we are waiting for the time when

> That great mysterious Deity
> We all, with open face, shall see:
> The beatific sight
> Shall fill heaven's echoing courts with praise,
> And wide diffuse the golden blaze
> Of everlasting light.

There shall then be "no need of the light of the sun or of the moon;" the necessity of symbolic instruction will be over, when we shall see Him as He is. And Oh, how different, in the degree of its effect, will the direct vision of that state be, in comparison of the reflex vision of faith now enjoyed! Faith is indeed transforming in its

* ——————— "In the cloud a bow
Conspicuous, with THREE listed colours gay.
Milton, B. ii.
"His tripple coloured bow."—*Ibid.*

nature, but the transformation which it produces is partial and defective; but "when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

May our faith, my dear friend, "grow exceedingly," and may every look we take afford us clearer and more distinct views of His Rainbow Crown. So prays

Your's affectionately,

LETTER XXVI.

THE IMPIOUS SCHEME AT BABEL FRUSTRATED.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

As the subject of the confusion produced at Babel, afterwards called Babylon, bears on the topics discussed in my letters, I shall offer no apology for bringing it before you, in order that I may point out to you the common origin of the several corrupted schemes of Religion which prevailed among the more ancient nations of the world, and of which enough remains in the pages of Philosophers and Poets to enable us to trace them all up to an original Revelation.

Our present inquiry will relate to the nature of that confusion which, Divinely and judicially produced among the Apostates collected at Babel, led to their dispersion thence, and to a consequent formation of the several nations which first peopled the earth after the devastation of the general deluge. The question which arises on this subject is, whether that confusion, from which Babel took its name, related to language or religious profession,—to a diversity of dialect or a diversity of opinion.

As this question has been elaborately discussed by the learned Vitringa, in the nine first chapters of his first book of *Observationes Sacræ;* and as I conceive that he has established the point which he undertakes to prove; I shall refer you to him for evidence on the subject. He maintains that no diversity of language from the original Hebrew existed till long after the building of Babel; since not only the descendants of Shem, who may be supposed to have had no connexion with that impious undertaking, but the descendants of Ham, also, retained, for many ages, the use of the primeval language. This opinion he supports by a copious appeal to Scripture documents, and to the earliest records of profane history.

His argument is, I conceive, in full accordance with the statement of the transaction at Babel which Moses has furnished, to which I shall briefly call your attention. The words of the sacred historian are as follow: Gen. xi. 1—9. "And the whole earth was of one language (*marg.* lip,) and of one speech. (*marg.* words) And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar, and they dwelt there. And they said, one to another, Go to, let us make brick and burn them throughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. And they said, Go to, let us build a city and a tower whose top (*may reach*) unto heaven, and let us make us a

name, lest we be scattered abroad on the face of the whole earth. And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the children of men builded. And the Lord said, Behold the people is one, and they have all one language (*Heb.* lip): and this they begin to do, and now nothing will be restrained from them which they have imagined to do. Go to, Let us go down and there confound their language (*Heb.* lip,) that they may not understand one another's speech (*Heb.* lip). So the Lord scattered them abroad upon the face of all the earth; and they left off to build the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel, (*marg. that is* confusion) because the Lord did there confound the language (*Heb.* lip) *of all the earth*: and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth."

If it has been proved by the author to whom I have referred you, that, as the primeval or Hebrew language was universally spoken long after the era of the dispersion, the means of dispersion described by the historian cannot have been a confusion of language or dialect.* And

* I am well aware that the Jewish Targum sanctions the common notion of a confusion of *language*; but it combines with this the idolatrous object of the conspiracy. It says, "The whole earth was of one speech or language, of one counsel, and one sort of words; for they used the sacred Hebrew tongue, which had been in use from the creation of

it is certain that the words which he has employed in describing that confusion, are usually applied to religious confession and not to the means of giving it utterance. It is thus employed in Ps. lxxxi. 5, where, as God is the speaker, the meaning cannot be that He heard a language that he understood not, literally taken; but a religious creed which he did not acknowledge or approve. In the same sense is the word *lip* used, Isa. xix. 18,* where the "language," or lip, "of Canaan" is synonymous with "swearing by Jehovah of hosts," or making a profession of faith in him. So also is the word applied in Zeph. iii. 9, where the restoration of a pure *lip* is the restoration of the pure religion. The word is also used, Hos. xiv. 3, on which Bishop Horsley observes, "Lips are here put for praises and thanksgivings uttered by the lips." And in the critical notes which follow his translation, he adds, "It is very remarkable that the word *lip*, when put for words

the world. And when at their first removal from Ararat, they came to Shinar, they consulted to build them a city, and a tower for *a house of adoration*, whose head might reach to, or be towards *the heavens*, and to place *an image of the host of heaven, for an object of worship* on the top of it, and to put a sword in his hand, that he might make war for them against the Divine armies, to prevent their dispersion over the face of the whole earth. Whereupon THE WORD OF THE LORD was revealed from heaven, to execute vengeance upon them," &c.

* See Vitringa in locum. Bp. Newton on the Prophecies. Vol. i. chap. xii. And Bp. Lowth on Isaiah.

uttered by the lip, seems peculiarly applied to set forms of words used in public worship. The Prophet Isaiah, speaking of the introduction of the true worship into Egypt, says, 'In that day shall five cities in the land of Canaan speak *the lip of Canaan;*' that is, as appears by the context, adopt the forms of public worship used by God's church in Palestine. The Prophet Zephaniah, speaking of the final conversion of all the nations of the earth, says, 'In that day I will turn to the peoples *a pure lip*, that they may all of them call upon the name of Jehovah;' where *a pure lip* evidently signifies a form of worship purged of all corruptions. It is used very remarkably in Ps. xii. 4;—'Our *lips* are our own.' The subject of that Psalm is free thinkers; their learning, audacity and final excision. The Psalmist drawing these gentlemen to the life, makes them say, what they are heard to say daily, 'Our lips are our own;' that is, we have a right to choose our own way of worship; to worship what we please, or not to worship at all, if that should best please us, &c."

That the word rendered *speech, (marg.* words) furnishes no objection to the sense which we have assigned to the word *lip*, is evident from its frequent application to the ten commandments or words, in which cases it must denote doctrines rather than the language in which they are expressed. Indeed the Hebrew has another word

for language or dialect, which it expresses by the organ of speech, *the tongue.*

But if there be no difficulty in our way arising from the terms in which the historian has described the nature of the unity which prevailed among the builders of Babel, which was miraculously confounded; is there none in the object which they proposed to themselves by the project which they undertook? or, rather, Is there not some evidence in the narrative that their object was the maintenance of uniformity in an idolatrous creed and worship which they had formed for themselves; and that the design of the Divine interposition on the occasion was the frustration of the impious scheme, which was effected by disunion sown among them?

It seems improbable that their object should have been to provide for themselves a security in case of another deluge by building a tower of great height; for such a tower, however large its dimensions, could have held but a few of the assembled multitude; besides which, *a "plain"* was a most improper spot for the erection of such a fabrick for such a purpose. The words "*may reach,*" which our translators have introduced into verse 4, are not in the original Hebrew, as the Italic letter in which they are printed indicates; and if these words be omitted, we may read the clause, "Go to, let us build us a city and a tower with its summit *to*, or on-

account of, THE HEAVENS,* and let us provide for ourselves there, lest we be scattered abroad on the face of the whole earth." The object of the builders seems to have been twofold; a provision for their civil accommodation, by erecting houses for themselves where they might live together and promote mutual safety and comfort, and also a provision for maintaining the ritual of worship to their Triune Deity *the heavens*, which they had substituted for the worship of JEHOVAH ALEIM.

That the object of the conspirators at Babel was of an idolatrous nature, derives support from the character of its leader Nimrod, of whom we read in the preceding chapter, that he was "a mighty one in the earth," chap. x. 8; and in ver. 9, that he was a mighty hunter† before the

* ה-שמים.

† The antediluvian and the post-diluvian corruption appears to be identified in character. *Apostacy*, or *persecution*, or both, must, I conceive, be implied in the word rendered "*Giants*" by our translators in chap. vi. 4. This rendering they appear to have adopted from the LXX. version γιγαντες. I transcribe the passage: "There were Giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men, which were of old men of renown."

The radical meaning of the word נפל, from which is derived the plural noun נפלים, rendered "*Giants*," is *to be fallen*, *to fall off*, *desert*, or *to fall upon* and *assault*. Both these notions may be included in the descriptive noun used in the passage I have transcribed; for *apostates* from the true religion are generally, if not always, *persecutors*, by word or deed, if from

Lord; so that his character became proverbial in after times. Now though Dr. Jennings in his *Jewish Antiquities* patronizes the literal sense of the word *hunter*, and thinks that Nimrod's skill and courage in the destruction of wild beasts are mentioned as having been the means of raising him to pre-eminence among his cotemporaries, just as the principal heroes of heathen antiquity are celebrated on the same account; yet when I consider that his conduct seems to be stigmatized as rebellion against Jehovah, and

their rank or numbers they have power to become such. "The carnal mind is enmity against God."—As this account of the state of mankind is preceded by a judicial declaration that God's Spirit should "not always strive with man," and is followed by a prediction of the general deluge; it cannot be doubted that moral evil is intended to be described. And as there is no moral evil in gigantic stature, and no reason why marriages between "the sons of God," THE ALEIM, or the descendants of Seth, the professors of the true faith,—and the daughters ה-אדם of human nature in its then fallen state, and without regeneration, or the misbelieving daughters of Cain,—should be productive of children of gigantic stature,—it should seem that bodily dimensions are not the direct object of the noun. These descendants of the נפלים, apostates and persecutors, seem to be the Nimrodians of the antediluvian period, persons who had deserted the faith of Adam and of Seth, and who, in process of time, became the avowed persecutors of the true religion in the persons of its professors. Comp. ver. 11. *Aquila* renders the word, as it occurs in Gen. vi. by επιπτοντες, and *Symmachus* by βιαιοι. Comp. Num. xiii. 33, and Ecclus. xvi. 17. Των αρχαιων γιγαντων οι απεστησαν, the old Giants who fell away.—Is not the pagan fable of the Giants' war derived either from the antediluvian or the post-diluvian apostacy?

that the term employed usually refers to oppression as practised against mankind, and often to persecution of the faithful; and when I add to this evidence the tradition of the Jews on the subject, I am led to a persuasion that the crime of Nimrod was opposition to the creed and persons of the worshippers of Jehovah. I can discover no appropriate sense in which a hunter of wild beasts can be called "a mighty hunter *before the Lord.*" The phrase cannot be taken in a good sense; and if in a bad one, what crime is supposable in the act of freeing the earth from the monsters which would have ravaged it? The Targum of Jonathan B. Uzziel explains the character given to Nimrod thus: "He (Nimrod) was *a mighty rebel before the Lord:* even as it is proverbially said—From the creation of the world there hath been none so mighty in hunting and rebellion before the Lord as Nimrod." To the same purpose is the Jerusalem Targum on the text; "He was mighty in hunting and transgression before the Lord: for he was a hunter of the children of men in their speech (or profession,) bidding them forsake the judgments (or religion) of Sem, and cleave to the judgments (or religion) of Nimrod." That the word which is translated "*a hunter*," is often used to denote a *persecutor*, will appear from the following passages among many others: Jer. xvi. 16; Lam. iii. 52, iv. 18; Prov. i. 17, 18; 1 Sam.

xxiv. 11; Ezek. xiii. 18, What then can be more probable than that the descendants of Ham, having increased greatly in number, and having corrupted the religion of Noah, became persecutors of their brethren the children of Shem; and that, with a view to strengthen themselves, and to avoid the reproaches which the fidelity of their orthodox brethren must have thrown on them, they separated themselves and formed the project at Babel?

"That *the Heavens*, under different attributes, corresponding with their several conditions and operations, were, together with the heavenly bodies, the *first* and *chief* objects of heathenish idolatry, is certain, not only from the ancient names of their Gods, but also from many plain declarations of Scripture. See Deut. iv. 19. xvii. 3. Job xxxi. 26—28. 2 Kings xvii. 16. xxi. 3—5. xxiii. 4, 5. 2 Chron. xxxiii. 3—5. Jer. viii. 2. xix. 13. Zeph. i. 5. Acts vii. 42, 43. Comp. Wisdom xiii. 1—3.*

Now if *the Heavens* were the earliest objects of idolatrous worship, and if the tower of Babel was built "to *the Heavens*," what is more probable than a supposition that this tower was, what we know it afterwards became, a temple dedicated to the

* See *Parkhurst* on the word שמו, and the authorities to which he refers. See also Gale's Court of the Gentiles. B. ii. chap. viii.

worship of *the Heavens?** That Babylon became, from this time, the metropolis of idolatry and persecution admits of no doubt;† and this increases the probability that its origin corresponded with its subsequent history.

But I submit to your consideration, whether the nature of the idolatry practised by Nimrod and his apostate followers, be not alluded to in the short account given of the apostate leader. "He was a mighty hunter before *the Lord*;"—JEHOVAH, and not ALEIM. The crime consisted not in antitrinitarianism, but in a rejection of JEHOVAH, and a substitution of the material trinity of nature for the Supreme Personalities in Jehovah. The unitarian doctrine, as it is called, was then unknown, and perhaps had few patrons till after the captivity of Judah; or, to fix an earlier period, till the defection of the ten tribes from the house of David in the time of Jeroboam. That which I have stated was the first species of apostacy; and all ancient history proclaims, that the earliest corrupters of Theology and Philosophy were Materialists, who forgot "the invisible things‡ of God, even his eternal Power and Godhead, and worshipped and served the *creature* instead of the CREATOR."

* See *Parkhurst* on the word כל: iii.

† Hence Babylon בבל the mystic name of the antichristian persecuting power in the Revelation of St. John.

‡ His attributes. See Macknight on Rom. i. 20. Notes 1 and 2.

The language of Jehovah, in speaking of the Babel project, seems to stamp a high degree of criminality on that project, which I know not how to ascribe to the building of a city and a tower for merely civil purposes. "This they begin to do; and now nothing will be restrained from them which they have imagined to do." ver. 6. They had taken the first step in a course of wickedness, which would naturally lead to still worse consequences. They had formed a plan, which, without interruption from Divine interposition, threatened the extirpation of the true religion from the earth. Had they been suffered to mature that plan, they would have become too strong a body; and following up the course of persecution of the faithful, of which Nimrod had already set an example, they would have become formidable enemies of their brethren who adhered to the worship of Jehovah, the Lord of heaven and earth.

If the hypothesis respecting the design of the tower of Babel which I have advocated, be admitted, the common argument drawn from this history in support of a personal plurality in the Godhead, will be greatly strengthened. For can it be supposed that the omniscient Spirit who guided the pen of the historian, when recording the first recorded instance of Polytheism, would have employed plural pronouns and verbs, in language ascribed to Jehovah when speaking of

Himself, had there been no personalities in the Godhead; especially as the plural name ALEIM does not occur in the whole passage? The plural name seems to have been intentionally avoided in this narrative, for the purpose of showing that the sin of the Babel-builders consisted in their rejection of Jehovah, or "the eternal power and Godhead," and in ascribing his attributes and operations to the material agents which he had created.

But though the transaction at Babel is the first *recorded* instance of idolatrous worship, there is good reason to believe that it was practised before the flood, and was the root of that abounding immorality which had overspread the earth,* and, together with its usual effects, was the meritorious cause of the destruction which followed. I say, there is reason to believe this; for since a period is fixed by Moses when "men began to call upon the name of Jehovah," Gen. iv. 26, he cannot be supposed to intimate that Jehovah had not been before worshipped, because he had himself recorded an instance to the contrary; but his meaning, as I conceive is, that then the children of Seth began to distinguish themselves and their worship by their use of the name Jehovah.

* Gen. vi. 11. "The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence." The "*corruption*" probably was related both to faith and morals; and the "*violence*" to the outrages of persecution.

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They had before found it sufficient to avow themselves worshippers of THE ALEIM, the Creators (Eccles. xii. 1) of heaven and earth: no question had hitherto arisen respecting Him whom Adam, and Abel, and Seth, had adored as their Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier; but among the seed of Cain a corruption of principles had been introduced, and this had taken such deep root, and had spread so widely, that the adherents to the worship of the supreme ALEIM found it necessary to separate themselves and their worship, which they did by adopting the name of Jehovah in their creed, in order to show that the object of their adoration was not the *material Aleim* (the term *Aleim* having become equivocal) whom the apostates worshipped. The phraseology which Moses has employed, describes the grand article in the faith of the antediluvian Patriarchs, wherein they differed from their idolatrous brethren. That which has rendered creeds and confessions necessary in the Christian era, rendered a like measure necessary among the early descendants of Adam, *viz.* prevailing heterodoxy.

This view of the reason why men "began to call on the name Jehovah," is strengthened by what is recorded of Abraham and of Isaac under like circumstances. See Gen. xii. 8. xiii. 4. xxi. 33. xxvi. 25. And when Naaman describes the Lord God of Elisha, he speaks of him as JEHOVAH, his (Elisha's) ALEIM, contradistin-

guished from his own ALEIM, the ALEIM of Syria. 2 Kings v. 11. But a still further confirmation seems to be afforded by the contest between Elijah and the prophets of Baal, recorded 1 Kings xviii. The question to be decided was thus proposed by Elijah, ver. 21, "If JEHOVAH be God," *the* ALEIM, * the true object of worship, "then follow Him; but if Baal, † then follow him." And ver. 24, addressing himself to the prophets of Baal, Elijah says, "Call ye on the name of your *Aleim*, and I will call on the name of JEHOVAH."

This view of the fact recorded Gen. iv. 26, is no novelty: it is to be found among the traditions of the Jewish Rabbis, an epitome of which, as they relate to this subject, is furnished by Ainsworth in his annotation on this passage. He adds that "the Heathen Philosophers counted *the Heaven* a living body," and refers to Aristotle ‡ in proof of the assertion. By this ascription of life to *the Heavens*, in contradistinction from the earth, I conclude the ancient philosophers meant the active character and agency of the heavenly fluid. On this subject volumes might be filled with extracts from their writings.

Thus, then, the course of impiety which took place before the flood, may shed light on a similar

* ה-אלהים.

† See Parkhurst on the word בעל, and the evidence there produced, that Baal was a name of the sun, which on account of its three conditions was sometimes called *Baalim*.

‡ De Cœlo. Lib. ii. cap. 2.

course taking place after it, and seems to confirm the hypothesis that the project at Baal was of an idolatrous character. This also may be traced up in the channel of tradition; for the Targum, already cited in p. 92, calls the tower which the apostates built, "an house of adoration;" and speaks of an image, perhaps in imitation of the CHERUBIC figures,* to the host of heaven, which was set on the top of that tower as an object of worship.

It is a painful but a profitable task, my dear friend, to trace the corruption of the human heart from stage to stage: to mark how the enmity of the carnal mind has, in different ages, discovered itself by rejecting the HOLY, HOLY, HOLY, JEHOVAH ALEIM of Revelation, and by setting up in his stead objects of adoration more suited to its natural inclinations. In the days of Enos, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, it became necessary for believers to distinguish themselves from apostates. Enos was born in the 105th year of Seth, and Seth was born in the 130th year of the life of Adam; so that within 250 years after the creation of man, mankind had, to a very considerable extent, forgotten God their maker, and apostatized from his worship. Nimrod was the son of Cush, and Cush of Ham, and Ham of Noah; so that again, after the flood, not more than 130 years had elapsed, before doctrinal impiety made a fresh separation necessary between the children

* Such, though in a very mutilated form, the Minotaur of Crete appears to have been.

of God and the children of the Wicked One. It is plain that, respecting both eras, the assertion of the Apostle is verified, that men "did not like to retain God in their knowledge." Indeed, the first chapter of the epistle to the Romans affords the best commentary on those parts of the early history of the world which we have been considering. It traces down the annals of idolatry through descending stages of corruption, from the philosophic and refined system of materialism in the earlier ages to the grosser abominations of heathenism in the apostolic times, ascribing all to the enmity, ignorance, and folly of the human heart. The subject we have contemplated is not a barren field of mere criticism: it sheds light on the natunatural condition of man in all ages and on the necessity, grace, and wisdom of "the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ."

The era of Christianity seems to have been postponed to so late a period as it was, for the purpose of producing a clear conviction as to the lengths to which the enmity of the human heart to God and Godliness would carry it, and as to its total inability to recover itself out of the snare of the devil. That this conviction *was* produced, appears by the complaints and confessions of many a heathen sage.*

* See the Author's Discourses on DIVINE INFLUENCE. Discourse VI.

Oh, what reason have we for thankfulness to the DIVINE ALEIM for that grace which is displayed in the Gospel of Christ! And how anxious should we be, lest we substract from or add unto that scheme of mercy which is "ordered in all things and sure!"—a scheme of mercy revealed to the guilty and despairing progenitors of our race at their dismissal from the earthly paradise; lost sight of and corrupted by the enmity and folly of man again and again, and again and again revealed by Divine compassion; and at last, in spite of every obstacle, realized and brought into full effect by the incarnation of Immanuel and the communication of his Spirit;—a scheme, providing by a Divine atonement for the expiation of guilt, however heinous, and the restoration of tranquillity to the distracted soul; and providing, by a communication of Almighty energy, for the regeneration of the heart, naturally sunk in ignorance and depravity, and for its restoration to a capacity of communion with God and enjoyment of the beatific vision of Him in his glory. Oh, let us continually anticipate, with holy delight, the period spoken of by the Spirit of Prophecy, in a passage already cited in this letter, (Zeph. iii. 9.) when the Lord has promised to "turn to the peoples," all the nations of the earth, "a pure lip," or confession of faith, "that they may all call on the name of Jehovah, to serve him with one consent." Then will all the degrading

systems of heathen Idolatry, and all the corrupted forms of pseudo-Christian faith and worship, give place to the confession of the true faith, in the acknowledgment of the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the worship of the Divine Unity. Then Jew and Gentile shall unite in ascribing to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, three persons in one God, all honour and glory, for ever and ever.

That we, my dear friend, may be prepared to join in the universal chorus, is the prayer of

Your's faithfully,

LETTER XXVII.

THE CALL OF ABRAHAM, AND THE INSTITUTION OF CIRCUMCISION.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

THE several renewals of Divine Revelation which were vouchsafed to the patriarchs, in exposition and confirmation of the covenant of redemption, run in the form of promises, or gratuitous assurances of good things to come. These promises are suspended on no conditions to be performed by the parties who are beneficially interested in them; but are described as indefeisible and certain. Indeed, it could not have been otherwise consistently with the purpose of God and the salvation of man. Thus, the promise of a son given to Abraham is spoken of by St. Paul: "Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth or addeth thereto. Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, 'And to seeds,' as of many; but as of one, 'And to thy seed' which is Christ. And this I say, that the covenant which was confirmed before of

God in Christ,* the law which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make THE PROMISE of no effect."† "The covenanting parties are God, and his Christ to be born of the seed of Abraham according to the flesh. Christ is the surety of the whole transaction; so that all the promises are in Him, YEA, and in Him AMEN," to the glory of the Triune Jehovah.

To none other of the patriarchs were so many discoveries of covenanted mercy made, as were afforded to the patriarch Abraham. They have been reckoned as eight in number. *First*, in *Ur* of *Chaldea*, when God commanded him to leave his country. *Gen.* xii. 1. Acts vii. 2, &c. Heb. xi. 8. *Secondly*, In the land of *Canaan*, near *Sichem*. *Chap.* xii. 6, 7. *Thirdly*, At *Bethel*, after his separation from Lot. *Chap.* xiii. 14. *Fourthly*, When God promised him a son, and a posterity to be compared with the stars in number. *Chap.* xv. 1—6. *Fifthly*, when God gave him the sign and seal of circumcision. *Chap.* xvii. 1, &c. *Sixthly*, When he entertained the three visitors in the plains of *Mamre*. *Chap.* xviii. 1, &c. *Seventhly*, When he was commanded to exclude *Ishmael* and *Hagar* from his family. *Chap.* xxi. 12. *Eightly*, When he was required

* "The covenant which was confirmed υπο τυ Θευ by God ΕΙΣ Χριστον το Christ."

† Gal. iii. 15, &c.

to sacrifice his son Isaac, a requisition which was afterwards revoked. *Chap.* xxii. 1, &c.* To these must be added, if the hypothesis which will be discussed in a future letter be admitted, the appearance under the character of Melchizedek, the king of righteousness and peace, which is recorded, *chap.* xiv. 18, &c.

It seems to me highly probable that all these manifestations of Jehovah to Abraham were real exhibitions of the Second Person of the ALEIM, and were presented to his view under the human form. That the first of them, on which I shall now offer you a few remarks, was not a dream of the night, nor any other effect produced on the patriarch's imagination, may be inferred, not only from the silence of the history on the subject, while in other instances it is expressly mentioned; but also from the manner in which St. Stephen has described the transaction, Acts vii. 2, &c. "The God of glory appeared† to our father Abraham." There was a *visible* exhibition of "the God of glory;" and the phrase which is used in speaking of Him who *appeared*, indicates that it was the Second Person of the Godhead; for "Glory," or Light in irradiation, is his peculiar and distinctive title. He is "the King of Glory;" Ps. xxiv. 7, 8. "The

* See *Fabricii Christologia. Diss.* iv. *p.* 106; and *Witsius* on the Covenants.

† Ωφθη *was seen* (1 Cor. xv. 5—8.)

brightness," or effulgence, of the Divine "Glory;" Heb. i. 3. "The Glory of Jehovah" that was to be "revealed;" Isa. xl. 5. "The Glory of Jehovah" who was to "*arise*" on the church, and who, in the following verse, is identified with Jehovah Himself. Isa. lx. 1, 2. Thus also our Lord Jesus Christ is called by St. James, chap. i. 2, "the Glory,"* and by St. Paul, "the Lord of Glory," 1 Cor. ii. 8, without any other epithet; and I apprehend that when the word "Glory" is used as a personal title of Deity, (unless the Father or the Holy Spirit be expressly mentioned, as in Eph. i. 17,) it points out to us the Second Person.

But how did he appear? In what form or shape? We are informed that, in one of the several instances on record which we have enumerated, he appeared as a man; Gen. xviii. 1. and it was One in the form of man who wrestled with Jacob. In narrating the several appearances, the same verb † is generally used; and in the memoir of the fourth instance it is said that THE WORD OF JEHOVAH *came* unto Abraham,‡ whom the patriarch addressed as JEHOVAH ALEIM. Chap. xv. 1, 2. This, it is true, is said

* Τ⊖ Κυριε ημων Ιησ⊖ Χριστ⊖, της δοξης; where the words "the Glory" seem to be in apposition with the preceding titles.

† ירא *appeared to*, or *was seen by*.

‡ See the sense attributed to these words in the Targums, &c, quoted in Allix's Judgement. *p.* 370.

to have been "a vision;" but that does not alter the nature of the appearance which was exhibited to him. Is it not reasonable then to suppose that all these appearances were in the human form, surrounded by such insignia of Deity as could leave no doubt on the patriarch's mind who it was that appeared to him? "The form of God" which St. Paul ascribes to our Lord before his incarnation, (Phil. ii. 6.)* seems to mean the glory which attended these appearances. It was what he did not retain during his incarnation, when he appeared "in the form of a servant;" it was what he laid aside during his incarnation, and therefore it could not be his Godhead, essentially considered. Though it may not be of the first importance for us to determine in what mode the communication was made; and though it may be enough for us to know that the mode was sufficiently explicit to satisfy the patriarch's mind respecting his Divine vocation; yet is it a gratifying view of the subject to consider, that He, who from the beginning "rejoiced in the habitable parts of the earth," and whose "delights," from the creation of man, have been "with the sons of men," (Prov. viii. 31.) did reveal himself, to the patriarchal expectants of his advent in the flesh, as man among men.

* See Macknight's note.

I shall not occupy your time by discussing the place of the patriarch's residence before Jehovah revealed himself, nor the spiritual state in which the Divine vocation found him, which appears to have been a state of idolatry, though not of the grossest kind. (See Josh. xxiv. 2.) The name of the place which he was called to leave may, perhaps, be itself considered as indicating the character of the idolatry which prevailed there. He was required to separate himself from the idolatrous country of his birth, from his kindred, and from his father's house, and to follow the guidance of Divine Providence in a pilgrimage towards a country which was afterwards to be given to his seed for an inheritance. This pilgrimage St. Paul has taught us to consider as allegorical, and he informs us that the patriarch himself so understood it; for he says that Abraham "looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Heb. xi. 10. The promises which encouraged the patriarch in leaving all that was dear to him, and in following his Divine Guide, were of a mixed kind. They related partly to temporal benefits to be bestowed on himself and his posterity, and partly to spiritual benefits. *Personally*, God engaged to be his "shield" and his "exceeding great reward:" and his seed was to become innumerable as the stars, or the sand of the sea. The New Tes-

tament has taught us that this promise of an innumerable seed, though literally fulfilled, had a further meaning, and is to be understood of all those who are partakers of like precious faith with him, whether Jews or Gentiles. And the fulfilment of this promise was suspended on another, viz. that in his seed should all nations of the earth be blessed. St. Paul has asserted, in Gal. iii. 15, &c, already quoted, that *this seed is Christ.* Thus, then, the grand paradisiacal promise was republished and confirmed. The blessing in the latter edition is, under a new form, the same of which assurance was given in the former, for that general blessing is the bruising of the Serpent's head, or, in the language of St. John, the destruction of the works of the Devil, an effectual counteraction of the mischief which the first temptation and the apostacy which followed it had produced. To the person and work of the Divine Mediator all the promises, emanating from the covenant of redemption, relate. In HIM, in whom grace was given us before the foundation of the world, they all meet as their point of convergence and concourse.

That Abraham understood the allegorical intent of his journey to Canaan, and of the country to which he was to go, is clear from the Apostle's remark concerning him, to which I

have referred—"He looked for a city which hath foundations,* whose builder and maker is God." Heb. xi. 10. That the city for which he looked is the heavenly state, (which is denied by Grotius and others,) could never have been doubted, had not this interpretation supported the evangelical character of the patriarchal dispensation. The description given of *that city*, which is distinguished from the moveable habitations in which the patriarchs resided during their pilgrimage on earth by the name of city, and whose "foundations" are expressly mentioned in opposition to the stakes and cords by which a temporary tent is secured to the soil on which it rests; and the ascription of the permanent edifice to God as its *builder* and maker, the design and the execution of the city being exclusively his own; all this proves satisfactorily, that this city is not the earthly but the heavenly Jerusalem. And when the Apostle asserts that Abraham *looked for* it, it must be evident that the basis of the patriarch's habitual exercise of that "faith," which "is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen," was the revelation and promise of God, either expressed or implied. Whether any thing more explicit than what is recorded in the several Divine communications made to Abraham, was revealed to

* THN τὴς θεμελιους εχουσαν Πολιν THE *city*.

the Father of the faithful respecting this city, we cannot say; but enough is to be gathered from the paradisiacal promise, taken in connexion with the renewal of that promise repeatedly made to the patriarch himself, illustrated as it was by the translation of Enoch, and by the promise of the earthly Canaan made to the future seed of Abraham; enough might be inferred from these promises and their illustrations to furnish Abraham with that information concerning the heavenly inheritance which was the foundation of his faith concerning it. His state of mind, during his pilgrimage on earth, may be identified with that of New Testament believers, of whom St. Paul says, (2 Cor. iv. 16, 17, 18.) "For which cause," (viz. a knowledge of Christ by faith, ver. 14.) "we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we look not at the things which are seen but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." The character and the objects of faith have been the same under every dispensation of the church; its character has been that of credit given to Divine testimony, and its objects have been Christ as the way and heaven as the end.

But the faith of Abraham and the preceding patriarchs, and we may include those that followed also, was not a mere assent to the truth of the Divine testimony which was afforded them. It was more. For the Apostle says of them that they "all died in faith, not having received the promises," the promised blessings which Divine Revelation made known to them, (the promises they had, but not the things promised); "but having seen them afar off," as distant objects, they "were persuaded of them and EMBRACED them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims upon earth." (Heb. xi. 13.) Their faith was not a cold and inefficacious admission of the truth revealed to them; it wrought by love and produced its proper practical effects. They "EMBRACED" the promises of the Redeemer's advent and its blessed results. To use the words of our Liturgy they "thankfully received the inestimable benefit" propounded to them. It was the scope of all their aims, the haven from all their toils.*

* "Ασπασθαι properly denotes to embrace any one, because when benevolently affected towards another, one is apt throw one's arms over him, and to *draw* him *strongly* to one's self." *Plutarch* quoted by *Parkhurst* on the word ασπαζομαι· Sense "IV. *To embrace mentally,* to lay hold on with desire and affection." See Heb. xi. 13. where *Parœus,* after *Chrysostom* and *Theophylact,* says, that this word is used by a metaphor taken from persons sailing, who, when they are at a distance from their wished-for port, *with joyful shouts salute it.* Thus *Wetstein* cites from *Virgil,* Æneid iii. line 522—4,

The promises, or promised blessings, of which the patriarchs were persuaded, and which, though afar off, they embraced by faith, are at the close of the chapter reduced to *one*. For in ver. 39, 40, the Apostle says that all those believers, of the patriarchal and levitical periods, of whom he had given a catalogue, "having obtained a good report through faith," viz. by the record of their names and characters in the Scriptures of truth, "received not THE PROMISE; God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." What that *better thing* is, can be no matter of doubt. It is the actual manifestation of God the Saviour in the flesh,—the accomplishment of that which was the ground of patriarchal hope and comfort, the advent of the promised Seed. In Him all the promises were centered. All Divine favour shown to sinners, whether before or after his coming, flows from the covenant of redemption of which he is the Surety. It was on the credit of his atoning sacrifice, if I may so speak, that pardon and eternal life were dispensed before that sacrifice was offered up; and it was by faith in that sacrifice, as rendered certain by the Divine purpose revealed concerning it, that believers from the beginning enjoyed peace with God and the hope

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Cùm procul obscuros colles, humilemque videmus
Italiam. Italiam *primus conclamat Achates;*
Italiam læto sócii clamore salutant."—*Parkhurst.*

of glory. But though salvation has, from the time of the first revelation of the woman's Seed, been assured to every believer; yet the Apostle ascribes some imperfection to the circumstances of the faithful, till the Lord Jesus had declared from the cross, IT IS FINISHED.

I shall not call the attention of my friend to the revelations of Jehovah which were vouchsafed to Abraham at *Sichem*, at *Bethel*, and again when the promise of an innumerable seed was given him, (chap. xv. 1) further than by observing that on every such occasion, and in every place where the patriarch sojourned, it is recorded that he built an altar to Jehovah, thereby marking the importance which he constantly attached to the instituted prefigurative rite, whereby the great atonement was to be kept in view. It shows his persuasion of the great Scriptural maxim, known and felt from the fall, and continually recognised by all the faithful, that, "Without shedding of blood THERE IS NO REMISSION" of sin. The building of an altar was a profession of faith, the rehearsal, if I may so call it, of the patriarchal creed. It was *acting* what we, on every occasion of solemn worship, verbally declare in the general confession of our church, and in the recital of the Apostles' creed. The act of sacrificing was virtually the prayer of our church, wherein we say, "O Lord the only begotten Son Jesus Christ; O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,

that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us."*

I must not, however, wholly pass over the rite of circumcision, which was enjoined as "the token of the covenant" into which the patriarch and his descendants were thereby sacramentally to enter. The historian's usual preface to that which took place on this occasion, informs us, that "Jehovah *appeared* to Abraham;" and it is added that, "after Abraham had fallen on his face, Jehovah *talked* with him." The name of AL SHADAI† (GOD ALL-BOUNTIFUL, the author and giver of every blessing) which Jehovah assumed on this occasion, seems to give additional force to the historic mention of a personal appearance, in proving that it was the Second Person of the Godhead whom Abraham saw and who "talked with him." It was on this occasion that the patriarch's name was changed from Abram to Abraham, as a memorial of the promises made to him, and as security for their fulfilment.‡

* *Communion Service.*

† אל שדי.

‡ This change of the patriarch's name from אברם to אברהם is involved in some difficulty and has occasioned much discussion among the learned. The different conjectures which have been formed on the subject may be seen in Fabr. Christolog. Diss. ix. ad Gen. xvii. 5, 6. After considering them, I am unable to satisfy my own mind on the subject. One thing however is clear, that the name was changed to denote that Abraham should be "the father of many nations;" and also that

The sacrament of circumcision is called by the ALEIM my covenant, the sign being used as in many other instances for the thing signified.* This covenant was to be inscribed not in tables of brass, in order to perpetuate its remembrance, but in the flesh of Abraham and his seed, and written in letters of blood in order that the atonement to be made by the surety of the covenant, the Author of the blessing, might never be forgotten. The Divine Speaker explains what he meant by calling circumcision his covenant, when, in ver. 11, he says, "It shall be *a token* of the covenant betwixt me and you." In like manner St. Paul describes it as having been "a seal of the righteousness of faith;" that which secured the introduction of "the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe."

It is to be observed that the covenant existed, had been variously confirmed, and also been received by Abraham, before the sign and seal of circumcision was appointed. It was further "*established*" at this interview between God and Abraham; but

this promise chiefly related to the promised Seed who was to descend from him according to the flesh, and a spiritual multitude of all nations to be converted to the faith of Abraham, and so to become his children according to promise. See St. Paul's reasoning on the subject, Rom. iv. 9—13, and *Vitringa De Beneficio Hereditatis Gentium. Observationes Sacræ.* Lib. v. Cap. 5. Sect. 6, 7, and 8.

* Matth. xxvi. 26, 28.

it is spoken of as being previously in force. The formal act of confirmation is described in Chap. xv. 9, &c; and even before that, we are told that "Abraham believed in Jehovah," that is, in the truth of the record, and "it was imputed to him for righteousness." On this faith of Abraham St. Paul reasons in the 4th chapter of his epistle to the Romans for the purpose of showing the true character of the Gospel salvation, in illustration and support of his thesis at the end of the third chapter. "We conclude that a man is justified by faith without the works of the law."* "What shall we say then, that Abraham our father as pertaining to the flesh hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory, but not before God. For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh, is the reward not reckoned of grace but of debt; but to him that worketh not, but believeth in him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness. ..... Cometh this blessedness then," that of justification, "upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned unto Abraham for righteousness. How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision but in

*"χωρις εργων νομου" "without works of law;" of any law whatever, there is no article before νομου to limit the meaning.

uncircumcision. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had being yet uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised, that righteousness might be imputed unto them also; and the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised. For the promise that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void and the promise made of none effect. Because the law worketh wrath; for where no law is, there is no transgression. Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed, not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all. (As it is written, Gen. xvii. 5. *I have made thee a father of many nations,*) before him whom he believed, even God who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were; who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations according to that which was spoken, *So shall thy seed be.* And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an

hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb. He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that what He had promised, He was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification." Rom. iv.

A variety of important points, connected with the personal and relative character and state of Abraham, are established by the Apostle's reasoning in the above chapter. We learn from it the freeness of the grace of justification as conferred on Abraham, and on all his spiritual posterity. It preceded his submission to the rite of circumcision; it commenced with the first act of faith in the promise of the future Seed of his body. It points out to us the nature of circumcision, and of all other sacraments of both dispensations: they are seals of the righteousness which is by faith, attestations on the part of God, that he "hath given" to sinners "eternal life, and that this life is in his Son." We are moreover taught that the covenant revealed to Abraham, was the covenant of redemption, and that he considered all the other promises made to him as converging

to and centering in the promised Seed, which is Christ. It appears that his wonderful faith respecting the birth of Isaac was, virtually, faith in the incarnation of Jehovah and the birth of Him of whom Isaac was so remarkable a type. It was the latter which rendered the former the object of his earnest solicitude, the consummation of his anxious desires. The Apostle's commentary also leads us to interpret the many nations of whom Abraham was to be the father, not only of the collateral branches of his family by Ishmael and Esau; but as having a far more extensive comprehension,—as including all, of all nations, who should tread in the steps of his faith, by believing in Him who was delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification.

The rite of circumcision symbolized three things; the state of man by nature as born into the world,—the necessity of redemption by the effusion of blood,—and the necessity of a new birth. In each of these respects it answered to the rite of Baptism under the New Dispensation, except as the former had a prefigurative relation to the redemption-price not yet paid, and as the latter has a commemorative relation to Redemption already accomplished. The former taught that without shedding of blood there could be no remission; and the latter teaches that the atoning blood having been shed, the purifying influence of the Holy Spirit, of which water is

the emblem, is effectually secured by that redemption-price.

It symbolized the state of man by nature, as born into the world the heir of guilt and pollution. By the prescription of the age at which it was to be performed, and by the very nature of the rite itself, it afforded instruction on the universality of "*original* or BIRTH SIN," that it "standeth not in the following" or imitation "of Adam (as the Palagians do vainly talk), but it is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam." It moreover had a prefigurative relation to the Incarnation of the Promised Seed who was to atone for that fault by shedding his precious blood, and whose sufferings were to commence at the period when the general guilt of human nature (his own alone excepted) was sacramentally acknowledged by the performance of this rite. It connected the native guilt of man with the doctrine taught from the beginning, that "without shedding of blood there could be no remission." And it further taught the necessity of a new birth, called "the circumcision of the heart." (See Coloss. ii. 11.) "This," says *Witsius*,* "I imagine was the meaning of the ancient Jewish Doctors when they said, that 'whenever one becomes a proselyte, he is like a new-born child.' 'This being so very

* *On the Œconomy of the Covenants. Vol.* iii. *Book* iv. *Chap.* 8. *Sect.* 19.

common in the mouths of their masters, Christ justly replies to Nicodemus, when he so impertinently inquired about being born again, "*Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things?*" John iii. 10. They taught that a new soul, which came under the wings of the Divine Majesty, and was received into the embraces of the Supreme Being, dropt down from some heavenly palace on him who was circumcised. By such dark and mysterious expressions, it is probable, the ancient Jewish Doctors described spiritual regeneration, which not being understood by the more modern, was by them changed into mere empty sound."

From the brief remarks which I have made on the institution of circumcision, the doctrine of the Seventh of our 39 Articles will be illustrated and confirmed; viz. that "The Old Testament is not contrary to the New: for both in the Old and New Testament, everlasting life is offered to mankind by Christ, who is the only Mediator between God and man. Wherefore they are not to be heard, which feign that the old fathers did look only for transitory promises." It will appear that Abraham "rejoiced to see Christ's day," and that his creed resembled our own, with this only difference that his was *prospective* and ours retrospective. His faith regarded what was future and ours what is past. Both the patriarchs and ourselves have enjoyed the light of the same sun,

though it shone on them in the morning of its rays, and it shines on us in its approximation to its meridian splendour. For that meridian splendour the church is still waiting, when "the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold as the light of seven days; in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound."*

I cannot conclude my letter without again referring to the manifest connexion between the rite of circumcision and that of baptism, differing indeed as prefigurative and commemorative sacraments, but designed, in different states of the church, to symbolize the same important and cardinal truths, and to answer the same purpose as introductory to the visible church of God. Both, it will be observed, inculcate the doctrine of original or birth sin; and if baptism be withheld from infants, its symbolic evidence on this momentous point is lost. If it be postponed to the age in which the sinner becomes capable of actual transgression, though submission to it then implies a confession of sin, it does not mark that sin as being corruption derived by natural generation from Adam; that confession implies nothing more than *an imitation* of Adam. Circumcision was, on the part of God, a *token* of his covenant, an

* Is. xxx. 26.

assurance of Divine favour to all who should seek it in the appointed way. It was, on the part of man, a profession of faith in the necessity of atonement for sin and of Divine influence to renew the heart. It was commanded to be performed on all the members of the visible church, whether adults or infants. It admitted them to the external privileges of the Jewish church, and those external privileges were adumbrations of real blessings to be enjoyed in the exercise of faith. The two ordinances of circumcision and baptism resemble one continuous line, in which I can discern no divergence, except in the point I have already mentioned, that the one was prefigurative and the other commemorative. It was necessary that when the atoning blood had been shed upon the cross, the symbol should be changed; and, consequently, the cleansing symbol of water was substituted for that of the expiatory virtue of blood.

Would you wish to see the variety of questions which have been raised on the institution of this rite of circumcision, I refer you with satisfaction to the eleventh dissertation of *Fabricius* in his *Christologia*, and to the authors, Christian and Jewish, to which he has referred. And I conclude with his pious prayer—"May we all be in Christ such Jews as are described, Rom. ii. 29, inwardly and not

outwardly; having the circumcision which is in the spirit and not in the letter; whose praise is not of man, but of God."

I am, my dear friend,

Your's &c.

LETTER XXVIII.

ON THE PERSON AND CHARACTER OF MELCHIZEDEK.

The short account of Melchizedek which is recorded in the xivth chapter of Genesis, has given rise to a variety of opinion respecting that mysterious personage. Some interpreters of Scripture have maintained that Melchizedek was a mere man, typifying by the office he bore in the time of Abraham, the future priesthood of Christ; while others have been of opinion that Melchizedek was not a type of Christ, but Christ Himself, appointed before all time "a priest for ever" by the oath of THE ALEIM, and appearing to Abraham, for the encouragement of the patriarch's faith, in the high character to which He was appointed, (the effect of which was essential to human salvation), and which He fulfilled (by anticipation) in the ages that preceded his incarnation as well as in those that follow it. *

* "It has been supposed, and not without some degree of probability, that Melchizedek was even more than a mere type; that he was a visible manifestation of the Son of God. Without venturing to decide on so obscure a subject, there is no reason to doubt of the frequent corporeal appearance of the

I hesitate not to say that this latter interpretation appears to me to be the true one, for which I shall assume the liberty of offering you my reasons.

The wonderful personage who bears the name of Melchizedek, is mentioned by that title in three several parts of Scripture: first, in the history of Abraham; then in the cxth Psalm; and lastly, in the epistle to the Hebrews, where we have a comment on the original record concerning him. If, however, the hypothesis, that Melchizedek is Christ himself, be founded in truth, the whole Revelation of the Bible relates to Melchizedek; for "the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy."

In assigning my reasons for believing that the personage who met Abraham after his victory over the confederated kings, was Christ Himself, I shall chiefly have recourse to the Apostle St. Paul's comment on the history; but I shall pursue my usual method by transcribing the several passages in the order in which they occur.

Messiah, during the period of the patriarchal and levitical dispensations. Whatever sentiments are entertained respecting the mysterious character of Melchizedek, his illustrious antitype seems evidently to be the person spoken of in the Hebrew Scriptures, under the name of the Angel Jehovah." *Faber's Hor. Mos. vol.* ii. *p.* 137.

"Some of the church took him to have been the Son of God himself, who then appeared to *Abram*, *εν ιδεα ανθρωπου*, in the form of a man." *Bp. Patrick.*

And, first, I beg your attention to the brief narrative in the book of Genesis, and then to the further information to be derived from the other parts of Scripture.

"And Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine: And he was the priest of the most High God. And he blessed him and said, Blessed be Abram of the most High God, Possessor of heaven and earth: and blessed be the most High God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thine hand.—And he gave him tithes of all." Gen. xiv. 18—20.

"The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." * Psalm cx. 4.

* "על דברתי מלכי צדק, *according to the matters* (viz. that are recorded) of Melchizedek. See this explained by St. Paul, Heb. vii. 1—3. The LXX, who render על דברתי, by κατα ταξιν, *according to the order*, have preserved the sense, though not the exact idea." *Parkhurst.* Parkhurst's explanation is approved of by Bp. Horsley. See his note C on Ps. cx. 4. In Græco est, κατα ταξιν *secundum ordinem.* Sed David, cujus mentem magis quam verba secutus est Apostolus, ait בדברתי מלכיצדל, quod eruditissimus Rabbinus Aben Esra recte explicat כמנהג מלכיצדק *in morem Melchizedeci, vel quemadmodum Melchisedec.* Neque aliud profectò verba Hebrææ sonant. *Cunæus de Repub. Hebr. Lib.* iii. *cap.* 3. Cunæus was a celebrated Dutch author, b. 1586, d. 1638. He was professor of civil law and politics at Leyden. Mr. Horne in his "Introduction to the critical study and knowledge of the Holy Scriptures," (vol. 2. Appendix, p. 36.) calls this work of Cunæus "a very learned work; which, till lately, continued to be a text book whence the continental professors of Hebrew Antiquities lectured."

In transcribing St. Paul's reasoning on the text of the Psalm which I have quoted, in his epistle to the Hebrews, I go back to chap. iv. 14, in order that you may see the connexion in which his comment stands.

"Seeing then that we have a great high Priest, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high Priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

Chap. V. "For every high Priest taken from among men, is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sin: who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way, for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity. And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins. And no man taketh this honour to himself, but he that is called of God as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high Priest, but he that said unto him, THOU ART MY SON, THIS DAY HAVE I BEGOTTEN THEE. As he saith also in another place, THOU ART A PRIEST FOR EVER AFTER THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK. Who, in the days of his flesh, after he had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying

and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared. Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered: and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; CALLED OF GOD AN HIGH PRIEST AFTER THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK. Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered seeing ye are dull of hearing. For when ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God, and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskillful (*marg.* hath no experience) "in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who, by reason of use, have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

Chap. vi. 13 "When God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by Himself, saying, Surely, blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For men verily swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things in which it

was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: which hope we have as an anchor of the soul both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil, whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, MADE AN HIGH PRIEST FOR EVER AFTER THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK."

Chap. vii. 1, &c. "For this Melchizedek, King of Salem, Priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him: to whom also Abraham gave a tenth of all: first, being by interpretation king of righteousness, and, after that, also king of Salem, which is king of peace; without father, without mother, without descent," (*marg.* without pedigree). "having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God, abideth a priest continually. Now consider how great this man* was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils. And, verily, they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham; but he whose descent is not reckoned from

* Ουτος *this* (person). *Man* is not in the original.

them, received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises. And, without all contradiction, the less is blessed of the greater. And here men that die receive tithes: but there he receiveth them of whom it is testified that he liveth. And, as I may so say, Levi also who received tithes, payed tithes in Abraham. For he was yet in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him. If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law) what further need was there that another priest should arise after the order of Melchizedek, and not be called after the order of Aaron? For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. For he of whom these things are spoken, pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning the priesthood. And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchizedek there ariseth another priest, who is made not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. For he testifieth, 'Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.' For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before, for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. For the law made nothing

perfect: but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God. And inasmuch as not without an oath he was made priest; (for those priests were made without an oath, but this with an oath by Him that said unto him, 'The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek') by so much was Jesus made a surety of a better Testament. And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: but this (man) because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. For such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people: for this he did once when he offered up himself. For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath which was since the law,* maketh the Son who is consecrated for evermore."

* Της μετα τον νομον, perhaps, "which (reached) beyond the law, though uttered before it. Unless the promise and the oath of God are to be distinguished, the oath by which the promise was confirmed was made before the world began." Tit. i. 3. *Parkhurst.*

Such, my friend, is the inspired comment on the history of Melchizedek in the book of Genesis, or rather on the reference made to that history in the cxth. Psalm. Let us then, with this clew to direct our steps, inquire who Melchizedek was.

The general opinion has been, though not without many exceptions, that Melchizedek was a mere man, a native of Canaan, who resided at a place called Salem, where he fulfilled the united offices of priest and king;—that, as no record remained of his genealogy, he might be said to have had none;—and that, as no obituary was preserved, he might be considered as living for ever;—and that, consequently, a sort of typical similitude existed between his person and priesthood and the person and priesthood of Christ.

All this is to me very unsatisfactory. To assume a similitude on the mere absence of document about the birth, parentage, and death of Melchizedek, circumstances of which no possible doubt could exist, if Melchizedek were a man like other men;—to make the silence of record a foundation for so important a chain of reasoning as that which the Apostle builds on the character of this great personage, appears to me dishonourable to the reasoning powers of the Apostle who wrote the Epistle, and still more so to the inspiring Spirit.

But where was Salem, the supposed seat of Melchizedek's empire and priesthood? Jerusalem was at that time called Jebuz, and did not change its name for some ages posterior to the era of Abraham.*—In what respects could a petty prince of a district in Canaan be so much greater in dignity and rank than the patriarch Abraham, who was constituted "heir of the world," and "the friend of God;" and of whose eminent piety so much is spoken in Scripture?—If Melchizedek reigned as an earthly potentate, and acted, in a literal sense, as "priest of the most High God," his residence, whether it was

* Another Salem, or, as the name is otherwise spelt, *Shalem*, or *Salim*, situate in Schechem, was, in the opinion of St. Jerom, the seat of Melchizedek's reign and priesthood; and certainly both Jebus, afterwards called Jerusalem, and this Shalem, lay in the line of Abraham's return to Hebron from the slaughter of the kings near Damascus; so that, were there no other reason for considering *Salem* to denote the *character* of Melchizedek rather than *the seat of his kingdom*, the difficulty arising from the early name of Jerusalem, as being called at that time Jebuz, might be removed by admitting St. Jerom's opinion, that the historian meant the more northern Shalem, or Sichem. But if Melchizedek were an earthly potentate, and if the seat of his government, whether it were Jerusalem or the more northern Salem, lay directly in the way of the confederated invading kings on their march to Sodom; and also in the direct line of Abraham's pursuit to Dan and Hoba; is it not extraordinary that the dominion of Melchizedek should have escaped from assault by the former, and that his troops should not have joined in the pursuit with the latter. See the probable line of march by looking at the places as marked in *Wells's Ancient Geography*.

Jebuz or Shalem in Sichem, could have been at no great distance from the places where Abraham sojourned for a very considerable time; and if this king and priest were so great a personage as he is represented to have been, is it conceivable that it should not have been the duty and privilege of Abraham to have sought his protection, and to have worshipped at his altar?*—Could the separation of Abraham from the rest of the world, as the depositary of Divine Truth, and the recipient of Divine promises, have been indispensably necessary, if a royal priest, of higher rank and quality, surrounded as his throne and altar must have been with pious subjects and worshippers, previously existed?—Even if the reign and priesthood of the district where they are supposed to have been enjoyed in the person

* Indeed, if St. Jerom's conjecture be right, that Salem was the northern city of that name and is to be identified with Sichem; the very first place where Abraham pitched his tent, after his entrance into Canaan, was the very seat of Melchizedek's kingdom. For we read Gen. xii. 6. that "he passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh."—Bethel and Hebron to which he afterwards removed, were at no great distance from the other Salem or Jebuz, and in journeying from the former of these places to the latter, it should seem that he must have passed through the heart of Melchizedek's dominions, had Melchizedek been king of the southern Salem. Yet no friendship appears to have taken place between these neighbouring worshippers of Jehovah; no protection or resting place was afforded by the royal believer to his afflicted brother, during his many seasons of danger and trial.

of Melchizedek, terminated with his life, it seems hardly credible, that all traces of his piety, if its influence reached no further than his own petty dominions, should have been so soon and so intirely effaced, as they appear to have been by the account which is given of the idolatrous state of Canaan at the time when it was given into the hands of the descendants of Abraham, only four generations afterwards. Indeed the hint which the Divine promise, Gen. xv. 16, gives of the *then* state of Canaan, where a reason is given for a delay of Divine judgment on the land, that "the iniquity of the Amorite," in whose district Abraham was then sojourning at Hebron, was "not yet full," implies that the Canaanites had made great advances in impiety and wickedness, and is hardly consistent with the supposed reign and priesthood of Melchizedek among the Jebusites or the Perizzites, in whose countries the two Salems stood.—And, lastly, might we not have expected, that the descendants of Melchizedek's subjects, if not all extinct, would have received some favour at the time of the invasion of Canaan by the Israelites, for the sake of Melchizedek, even if they had lost his piety; as the descendants of Lot did for the sake of their ancestor?

If it can be proved from the original record, or from the Apostle's reasoning founded upon it, that Melchizedek was an earthly priest and king,

all these questions would be nothing to the purpose. The obligation to believe the positive word of God would be paramount. But I must own that both the original record, and the Apostle's reasoning founded on it, concur with the difficulties arising out of the questions I have proposed, in leading me to believe that the meeting between Melchizedek and Abraham was one of those gracious manifestations of the Second Person in Jehovah, with which the patriarchs were often favoured before his incarnation, and that, with a reference to this interview, as well as to others, Abraham is said to have seen the day of Christ, and to have rejoiced in the prospect.

Let us again advert to the narrative: and then to the cxth Psalm, with the Apostolic comment on it. We will begin with the narrative, and then proceed to the exposition.

The account of the interview which Moses has furnished, is short, and I think affords no evidence of the literal reign and priesthood of Melchizedek. The personage who met Abraham is called Melchizedek, which means, as the Apostle informs us, "king of righteousness;" and he is also denominated "king of Salem," which the Apostle interprets to signify "king of peace."*

* Duo nomina tribuuntur huic summo regi in Genesi. Prius est *Melchisedec*; alterum *Melechsalem*. Non enim illud magis quam hoc existimari nomen proprium decet. Vox *Melech*

Christ is both; and his former title is the foundation of the latter, for his mediatorial righteousness is the basis on which is built that peace which he bestows on sinners. He gave "glory to God in the highest" by a fulfilment of the law for man, and thus was authorised to bestow "peace" on the subjects of his redemption. If it should be said, that the *jod* in the word *Melchizedek* marks it as the proper name of a person, while its omission in *Melech-salem* shows that the latter is not a personal title; I answer that there is little solidity in this inference; for the *jod* might be euphonious in the one name and not in the other; and I need scarcely add that such compound names are very common throughout the Scriptures.

It is not said in the record that Melchizedek, when he met Abraham, came from any specified place: all that is stated is this, that he "brought forth bread and wine" for the refreshment of Abraham and his attendants, who may be supposed to have been exhausted by their march and conflict. In the kinds of the refreshment which was furnished, there seems to be an allusion

Hebræis *regem, Sedec justitiam, salem pacem,* notat; idque tyronibus in Hebraismo haud est ignotum. Itaque *Salem* non est hic nomen urbis, quemadmodum neque *Sedec:* aut eant, qui veteribus erroribus novos superstruunt, et in regno Cananææ imaginariam urbem aliquam *Sedec* collocant; par enim ratio ejus erit cum stramentitio illo *Salem.* *Cunæus, De Repub. Hebr. Lib.* iii. *Cap.* 3.

to the refreshment of the spiritual household of Abraham in their conflict with the Devil, the world, and the flesh. The correspondence between these refreshments, and the sacramentally prefigurative *flour*-offering and *wine*-offering of the typical dispensation on the one hand, and the commemorative bread and wine which, on the other, "the Lord has commanded to be received" under the Gospel dispensation, needs no explanation.*

Melchizedek, as Abraham's superior, pronounced a solemn blessing on the father of the faithful; and the patriarch gave to Melchizedek a tenth of the spoils which he had taken, thereby recognising the equity of Melchizedek's claim to superiority—an act which, I conceive, may mean, that he dedicated it to the service of his Divine Visitor, to be employed in the promotion of his glory. His grandson Jacob vowed to do the same after the Divine intercourse which he enjoyed at Bethel. Gen. xxviii. 22.

This is the whole of the narrative in the book of Genesis, on which St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, builds a superstructure of most important doctrines. At least he does so at second hand; for the Apostle's immediate reference is made to the construction of this narrative

* מנחה, rendered in our translation a meat-offering, was an offering of *flour*. Levit. ii. 1, &c. vii. 14, &c. נסך, rendered a drink-offering, was a libation of *wine*.

furnished by the Spirit of inspiration in the cxth Psalm, where the Divine edict by which our Lord was constituted the great High priest of our profession, is thus stated—"Jehovah hath sworn, and will not repent" (the oath is an irrevocable one) thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek."

If Melchizedek was, as is generally supposed, a mere man, raised up as a type of our Lord;—if he was, as the Psalm on which the Apostle reasons seems to assert, constituted a priest by the solemn oath of Jehovah; and if he officiated as such on behalf of a people who were worshippers of the true God;—it appears extraordinary, that the history which details so largely the life of Abraham, should contain so little notice of one who was so greatly Abraham's superior, and of an office so highly and widely important as that of a general priest and intercessor.* But if Melchizedek was Christ himself, appearing to Abraham in a way that anticipated his future incarnation and official character, then it is easy

* Quid causæ, obsecro, est, cur hunc justitiæ et pacis regem non credamus fuisse eundem eum filium Dei, qui postea, ad quercum Mamre, duobus comitatus sociis, Abrahamo apparuit, cibum cum illo sumpsit, adfuit unà in unis ædibus, ac denique colloCutus cum illo est? Mihi sanè majus certiusque argumentum divinæ celestisque naturæ videtur, homini in media via de repente, velut e machina supervenire, eique benedicere, et alimenta potumque dare, quàm hominis tectum subire, hospitio ejus excipi, epulis accumbere, sermones cum illo serere. Unum

to understand the object of his appearance; and the short notices of his person and character, furnished by the narrative in Genesis and the reference to that narrative in Psalm cx, are sufficient for the purpose of the Divine record, and will be found to have been illustrated by all the other parts of Scripture which relate to the Divine Intercessor.

Let us now proceed to the inspired comment on the text of the Old Testament, given by the author of the epistle to the Hebrews. And let me beg your attention, as I pass to this subject, to the importance which is ascribed to the Old Testament Scriptures, by the manner in which the Apostles continually quote them in the support and illustration of Christian doctrine. Surely they should not be neglected as they are even by many real Christians! And let me further observe, that the notion of some commentators, who consider the quotations made from the Old Testament by the inspired writers of the New, to be used only in a way of *accommodation*, * appears to me

modò discrimen est, quod in capite xviii Geneseos expressè tandem dicitur, Deum fuisse qui Abraham adierit: de Melchisedeco autem illud non ait quidem Scriptor Geneseos, sed mysterium hoc reliquit explicandum Davidi et Paulo, qui nos de illo dubitare amplius non sinunt. *Cunæus. p.* 279.

* "Because they (the Apostles) sometimes only touch at places of the Old Testament, without using them as formal proofs of what they then handled; Socinus and his disciples have fancied that those citations out of the Old Testament, which are made use of by the Apostles, though they represent the Messias as

a reflection on the authors of such quotations, since no substantial justification can be offered for so fanciful an employment of Scripture: besides which, the quotations are generally introduced in a logical method by particles which show that they were intended to afford *evidence* in support of the fact or doctrine which the writer

being the same with the God of Israel, yet for all this are but bare allusions and accommodations, made indeed by them to subjects of a like nature, but not at all by them intended as arguments and demonstrations.

"Nothing can be more injurious to the writings of the New Testament than such a supposition: and there can hardly be an opinion more apt to overthrow the authority of Christ and his Apostles, and to expose the Christian religion to the scorn both of Jews and Heathens. For the bare accommodation of a place of Scripture cannot suppose that the Holy Ghost had any design in it, to intimate any thing in it sounding that way, and consequently the sense of that Scripture so accommodated is of no authority. Whereas it is a most certain truth, that Christ and his Apostles did design, by many of those quotations, to prove what was in dispute between them and the Jews." *Preface to Allix's Judgment of the Ancient Jewish Church.*

The design of the author's learned work is to show that our Lord and his Apostles, in their quotations from the Hebrew Scriptures, or allusions to them, referred to recognized interpretations found in the accredited writings of the ancient synagogue, which the Jews themselves admitted as the authorized sense of such passages. Without such a reference, the comments of Christ or his Apostles, their inspiration not being admitted by the Jews, could have had no influence to produce conviction in their minds. The necessity of supposing this reference gives considerable importance to the apocryphal books of Scripture, to the Targums and Talmuds, and the voluminous writings of Philo Judæus, where we must look for the comments of the ancient Jewish Church.

is maintaining. Such phrases as "*For* it is written," or "*as* the Scripture saith," &c. must imply much more than that there is some similitude, without any designed connexion, between the things thus compared with each other.—But I return to my more immediate subject.

It is the object of St. Paul, in the several chapters of his epistle to the Hebrews in which Melchizedek is introduced, to prove to them, that there was a necessity, arising out of the state of mankind, for a greater priest than the Aaronic institution could supply;—ONE who should have a sacrifice to offer, which should have efficacy to purify the conscience from sin, and not merely cleanse the offender from ceremonial impurity;—ONE who should be qualified by the dignity of his person and the value of his offering, to satisfy Divine Justice, and so be invested with an official right of "saving *to the uttermost*,* all that come unto God by him. To this end he shows that it was necessary for the priest, of whose office the Aaronic priesthood afforded an imperfect representation, (for perfect from the nature of the case the representation could not be) to be appointed to his function by the oath of Jehovah, in order that no doubt might exist of his authority in exercising that function; and to be possessed of an endless life in order to preclude the necessity

* Εις το παντελες

of a succession of persons in the mediatorial acts which were required, *viz.* those of atonement and intercession, since such a succession would prove, as it did in the Aaronic mediation, imperfection and insufficiency. And then, in proof that such a priest had been provided in the covenant of redemption, (in the revelation of which covenant the mosaic institute was a sort of explanatory parenthesis) the Apostle referred to what had been written in the cxth Psalm, where the Messiah who is the object of the address, is spoken of as thus qualified, being appointed to his office by an oath which Jehovah had sworn, and which he would never violate, and being thereby constituted "a priest *for ever*." This priest, the Apostle reminds the Hebrews, had appeared to their father Abraham, long before the Aaronic priesthood existed, to whom he was infinitely superior, as is evident from the blessing which he pronounced on the patriarch, and from the homage which the patriarch paid him by dedicating to him the best of the spoil which he had taken from the discomfited enemy.

That the person, priesthood, and kingdom of Melchizedek were qualified by perpetual duration to meet the wishes of the anxious soul of man, when awakened to a sense of its wants and dangers, was evident from the record in Genesis of the appearance of that Divine Personage to their father Abraham. He was "before Abraham:"

He had entered on the office of Mediator, to which he had been appointed by the antemundane oath, from the time of the Fall; and when he appeared to Abraham, it was in his proper character of a royal priest.

In stating the qualifications of Melchizedek, with a view to prove the unsuccessional character of his priesthood, the Apostle says (Hebr. vii. 3) that he was "without father, without mother, without descent"* (or, *marg.* pedigree) "having

* Sed neque hoc sententiæ nostræ repugnat, quod justitiæ ille pacisque Rex απατωρ και αμητωρ, *sine patre, ac sine matre* fuisse dicitur; non enim profectò Divus Paulus mysterium illud duplicis naturæ spectavit, quod ejusmodi est, uti Messiæ quidem Divinitas patrem, mortalitas verò matrem, ac seorsim neutra utrumque parentem agnoscat. Pertinere illud ad ea tempora non potuit, cum nondum hominem induisset humani generis Servator. Sed hoc utique sensit potius Apostolus, non esse eum communi lege ex patre atque matre, neque ex libidine aut conjunctione viri fœminæque satum, sed eternum eum esse, et (quod Esaias Vates in capite Liii. ait) *nihil posse dici de generatione ejus*, Sanè verò ii ipsi, qui Melchisedecum Salemensium regulum, hominemque mortalem fuisse volunt, fateri coguntur ea omnia, quæ de illo Apostolus dixit, etiam Messiæ convenire. Quòd cum ita sit, profectò non aliter Messiam απατορα και αμητορα, patris matrisque exortem cogitare possumus, quam eo pacto, uti jam nos significavimus.

Equidem ego animadverto quoque, Melchisedeci Sacerdotium a Divo Paulo perpetuum atque infinitum constitui; ita quippe ait, μητε αρχην ημερων, μητε ζωης τελος εχων, μενει ιερευς εις το διηκενες, *neque initium dierum, neque vitæ finem habens, manet sacerdos jugiter:* ex quo colligitur, si Messiam et Melchisedecum non esse unum eundemque sed duos credimus, etiam hinc jam effici sacerdotes, quorum functio nullis circumscripta annorum spatiis in omne ævum durat. Quod certè nemo veterum antea,

neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like unto the Son of God, abideth a priest continually." *

Can this be said of any mortal man? or, Is the silence of history respecting the birth, parentage and death of any mere mortal a sufficient ground

neque e recentioribus quisquam hactenus vel per somnium dixit. Nunc tandem illud dicamus, quod rerum omnium primum maximumque nobis est. Haud dubium est quin Judæos genius aliquis malè advocatus in eum detruserit errorem, uti existi marent id quod hodie in scriptis eorum legitur, *Melchisedecum fuisse filium Noachi, Semum, qui ad tempora usque Abrami Isaacique superstes fuerit.* Hac futili opinione imbutos Judæos Apostolus ad sublimiorem vocat contemplationem: et, de hoc ipso Melchisedeco, qui non Semo tantùm sed cunctis major esset hominibus, verba facturus, hac præfatione utitur, περι ȣ πολυς ημιν ο λογος και δυσερμηνευτος λεγειν· *De quo nobis multa sunt dicenda, eaque difficilia explicatu.* Ecce, stupet ad magnitudinem personæ, et ineffabilem confitetur, quod nunquam facit, cum de aliis umbris typisque loquitur, quibus fuerat olim regnum Messiæ figuratum. Dein subjicit, χωρις ϖασης αντιλογιας το ελαττον ὑπο τȣ κρειττονος ευλογειται· *Sine ullâ controversiâ non benedicit nisi major minori.* Hoc vult, divinioris cujusdam naturæ eum fuisse, nec in hominibus numerandum, quia, tanto benedixit patriarchæ certè major illo digniorque esse debuit. Etiam comparat illum cum Levitis, και ωδε μεν δεκατας αποδηϑησκοντες ανδρωποι λαμβανȣσιν, εκει δε μαρτυρȣμενος οτι ζη· *Atque hic quidem homines, qui moriuntur, decimas accipiunt; illic autem is, de quo testatum est quod vivit.* Duo notat; primum, quod Levitæ, quibus decimæ dabantur, *homines* erant; dein quod *morerentur:* at hunc Sacerdotem, cui Abramus decimas dedit, non hominem, non mortalem ait fuisse, sed eum, *de cujus vitâ et eternitate,* inquit, *testimonium habemus omni exceptione majus.* Quodnam autem illud est? Nempe hoc Davidis, quod citat; *Tu es sacerdos in æternum, sicut Melchisedec* Quasi dicat, *Tu es ille justitiæ pacisque rex, ille,* inquam, sacerdos qui

* Εις το διηκενες·

for so important a type as the memoir of Melchizedek is supposed to afford? Is the doctrine of the dignity of our great High Priest to be founded on an accommodation of a circumstance so very common as the want of biographical record? For you will remember that the Apostle's proof rests wholly on his quotation: he left nothing to be inferred from his own apostolical character, which the Hebrews might dispute. He rested the weight of the important inference on the text which he adduced from those Scriptures which they recognized as Divine.

vivis æternusque es; quem vidit Abrahamus, decimisque et muneribus veneratus est, et Melchisedecum appellavit, cum appellare eum majore ac ampliore nomine hand poterat. Etiam illud scriptum extat, vers. 15 and 16. Κατα την ομοιοτητα Μελχισεδεκ ανιϛαται ιερευς ετερος, ος ε κατα νομον εντολης σαρκικης γεγονεν, αλλα κατα δυναμιν ζωης ακαταλυτε· *Ad instar Melchisedeci exoritur sacerdos alius*, diversusque a Levitis, *qui non ex lege, cujus mandatum sit carnale, sacerdos est, sed ex vi indissolubilis vitæ.* Nimirum quod in Levitis fuisse negat, id in Messiâ et Melchisedeco ponit, *vim indissolubilis vitæ.* Paulò ante dixit, ver. 11; *Si consummatio per Leviticum sacerdotium erat, quid amplius erat opus alium exoriri sacerdotem*, secundum ordinem Melchisedeci? Utique hoc omnino significare vult, nullam consummationem eorum, quæ promissa quondam erant, fieri potuisse per Leviticum sacerdotium; itaque opus fuisse sacerdotio perfectiore, cujusmodi fuit Messiæ illud, sive Melchisedeci: et si Melchisedecus mortalis homo fuit, et Salemensium regulus sacerdosque, ut isti aiunt; sane ineptum sit majorem perfectionem hujus sacerdotio, quam Levitarum, adscribere. Salemenses enim siti in media erant Cananæa, quæ regio nondum sacra susceperat rectæ religionis, quoniam recens in eos terræ fines advenerat Abrahamus. *Cunæus De Repub. Hebr. Lib.* iii. *Cap* 3.'

In those prominent features of the supposed typical character of Melchizedek which the Apostle has specified, it is difficult to discover how Melchizedek could be a type to his own cotemporaries; for they must have known his birth, parentage, and death. To them therefore no light was shed on the character of the antitype by the peculiarities of the type. Abraham and his family, and the subjects of Melchizedek's kingdom and priesthood, could not have seen the nature of the kingdom and priesthood of the future Messiah in any prefigurations furnished by a defect of genealogical record, though the circumstances unrecorded might be afterwards accommodated as corresponding features between the two personages. In this instance the typical circumstances must be supposed to differ in their object from their use in all other similar cases; for in every other case, I apprehend that the type had a primary reference to the instruction of mankind at the time when it was exhibited, previous to the appearance of that which it prefigured.

But it has been said that it is the *priesthood* of Melchizedek, and not his *person*, of which the Apostle speaks as being typical of the Messiah, and that this priesthood being insulated in his own person, since he had no predecessor and no successor in the office, may be said to have been perpetual; and that, as he exercised this office through his whole life, not entering upon it at

thirty years of age, nor ceding it at fifty, according to the law of the Aaronic priesthood, the language of the Apostle may be *accommodated* to these circumstances.* But how much, on this hypothesis is assumed without the shadow of proof; and when all is conceded, how little is the difficulty relieved which is found in the Apostle's description of Melchizedek! It is positively affirmed that he was "without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life," and that he "abideth a priest continually;"—and that "it is witnessed of him that HE LIVETH." Where, it may be asked, is this testimony to be found, but in what the Scripture has said of the Son of God? No mortal priest nor king can answer to the description.

Those who maintain that the Apostle's description of Melchizedek as being "without descent," means no more than that his pedigree was unrecorded,† and that the object of St. Paul was to

* See Macknight on the Epistles. Vol. iii. *p.* 356.

† Dicendo tamen in extremo est, quid veteres recensioresque commenti sint ad locum Apostoli interpretandum. Videbant rem obscuram et difficilem esse. Magnum aliquid audendum fuit. In re crepera et ancipiti præceps capienda via est. Igitur illud *απατωρ, αμητωρ αγενεαλογητος, sine patre, sine matre, sine genealogia*, haud ideo dictum putant, quia parentes non habuit Melchisedecus, sed *quia nec ante nec postea eorum nomina adscripsit Moses*. Et rursus, *μητε αρχην ημερων μητε ζωης τελος εχων, μενει ιερευς εις το διηκενες, nec initium dierum, neque vitæ finem habens, manet sacerdos in æternum. Nempe, natus quidem*

show that Melchizedek did not descend from Abraham, should bring forward some evidence of a necessity for proof to those, to whom the Epistle was addressed, and who had the book of Genesis in their hands, that a cotemporary of Abraham, who was probably his senior in age as well as his superior in rank, did not descend from his loins.

est, inquiunt, *mortuusque ; sed quoniam ejus rei mentio non fit, fuisse æternus existimatur ; et Messiæ naturam divinam velut typo repræsentavit.*—Si nihil aliud dixisset Apostolus, quam αγενεαλογητος, adduci possem uti in eorum sententiam pedibus irem : nunc desertè explicat verba sua, aitque μητε αρχην ημερων, μητε τελος ζωης εχων, μενει ιερευς εις το διηκενες : *nec initium dierum, nec vitæ finem habens, manet sacerdos in perpetuum.* Utique non quid Moses dixerit tacueritve, sed quid res sit, et quid sibi videatur, ait. Quicquid tribuit illi Apostolus, fultum est non Mosis reticentia, sed Davidis affirmatione. Quod hactenus non observaverunt interpretes : non enim ait, *Cujus mors reticetur a Mose* sed contra, *De quo Davidis testimonium extat quod vivit.* Ο μαρτυρουμενος οτι ζη· Quod profecto longe aliud est. Potest is obiisse, cujus obitus tacetur : potest et in vivis esse. Quod enim silentio transmittis, in incerto est ; nihil quippe affirmas. At de quo dicitur οτι ζη, *quod vivit,* et quidem *cum emphasi,* ad differentiam Levitarum, qui in eodem commate appellantur ανθρωποι αποθνησκοντες *homines mortales ;* is, inquam, de quo tam evidenter hoc asseritur, non potest mortalis fuisse.—Cæterum, Qualis sit hæc vita, quam Melchisedeco tribuit Apostolus, nemini obscurum esse potest. Ait David, *Tu es sacerdos in æternum, sicut Melchisedec :* nempe sacerdotium æternum Melchisedeco adscribit vates : et ad exemplum illius, etiam Christo. Hoc Davidis testimonium citat Apostolus, verbis quidem aliis, sed eodem sensu. Ο μαρτυρουμενος οτι ζη : quod perinde est ac si diceret, *is, qui, teste Davide, in eternum vivit, sacerdosque est.* Hæc est vera et genuina sententia verborum Pauli. *Cunæus,* sicut antea.

The usual interpretation of the following words, "having neither beginning of days nor end of life," is to me equally unsatisfactory. To say that the time of the priests' ministration is by St. Luke (chap. i. 23.) called "*their days*," is nothing to the purpose; for St. Luke is not speaking of Zachariah's priestly office, but of his attendance at the temple in the order of his course, or with the division of priests to which he belonged; the service of the temple being allotted to parties of priests who in succession fulfilled its duties. How this can possibly typify eternity, past and future, I know not. Nor is more light shed on the subject of the perpetuity of Melchizedek's priesthood, by the observation of the author from whom I derive these attempts at explanation, that the service of the Priests began at thirty years of age, and terminated at fifty; for I can perceive no allusion to these limitations in the words of the Apostle as furnishing a converse of Melchizedek's priesthood.

My author's rendering of the words, at the close of verse 3,* which note the perpetuity of Melchizedek's priesthood, seems to me utterly indefensible; and his references to two passages in this Epistle where he thinks the same sense must be assigned to them, fail of affording him the sanction he wants. In Heb. x. 1, the phrase

* Εις το διηκενες which Macknight renders "*all his life.*"

is literally and well expressed in our translation by the adverb "*continually;*" and in ver. 12 of the same chapter, it is, I apprehend, properly joined in our version with the latter clause, and affirms the perpetuity of our Lord's session at the right hand of God, as affording evidence that no other sacrifice for sin than that of his own offering, is necessary to our redemption and salvation. Such an attempt to limit the meaning of the Apostle's phrase shows the difficulty in which the learned critic found himself involved in explaining the perpetuity ascribed to the person and priesthood of Melchizedek, consistently with his own hypothesis. Besides, a fulfilment of the priest's office *through his whole life* (though it can hardly be extended backward to childhood and infancy) would be a very imperfect feature of distinction between Melchizedek and Aaron, as the latter was not divested of his priestly robes till he had gone up to Mount Hor to die there, having fulfilled the high office from the time of his consecration to that of his death.

Another alteration of the text of our English version appears in the new version of Macknight, evidently arising out of the difficulty he felt, but explained by no note, and, as I conceive, made without any sanction. He has changed the present tense used in our version into the past tense, and instead of *remaineth,* he reads *remained.* "He *remained* a priest *all his life.*" If our own

version be just, and I see no reason for calling it in question, the Divinity of Melchizedek seems irrefragable; for of whom but of the God-man Mediator can it be predicated, that he "*remaineth* a priest *continually:*" or as it expressed, chap. vii. 24, "Because he continueth ever, he hath an unchangeable* priesthood." The use of the present tense, here, seems to have the same force as when our Lord said, "Before Abraham was, I AM:" not *I was*, but I AM; possessed of an existence without a beginning or an ending.

If any difficulty should be supposed to arise from the expression of the Psalmist on which the Apostle comments by saying that, according to the prediction of the Psalmist, *another* priest, not differing from Melchizedek as the whole context shows, but differing from the Aaronic priests, was to arise "*after the order* of Melchizedek;" I would call your attention, with a view to the removal of that difficulty, to the 15th and 17th verses, in which the expressions "*after the order*," and "*after the similitude* of Melchizedek," appear to be used as synonymous; or, rather, by the use of the latter phrase, the Apostle explains the former as found in the text

* Ἀπαράβατον which doth not pass from him into the hands of another. If Melchizedek was a person distinct from the Son of God, the priesthood of his order must have passed from him to our Lord when he became "a priest after the order of Melchizedek," and consequently was successive, which is the

of the Psalm.* It is therefore important that, with a view of ascertaining what the Apostle meant, we should inquire, whether the ascription of *similitude* necessarily implies a distinction of persons, or whether it may not describe successive states of the same individual, or even identity of character.

It is affirmed then by the Apostle, in chap. vii. 3, that Melchizedek was "made like unto," or bore a resemblance of,† "the Son of God." But this assertion cannot, surely, be necessarily understood to mean, that Melchizedek was not the Son of God himself, in a previous exhibition of what he was to be at his future incarnation. Again, at the 5th verse, the Apostle says, that it

very thing the Apostle denies, and on the denial of which his chain of reasoning is wholly dependant.

* "Melchizedek having neither predecessor nor successor in his office, his priesthood could not be called *an order*, if by that phrase is understood a succesion of persons executing that priesthood. Wherefore κατα ταξιν must mean *after the similitude* of Melchizedek, as it is expressed, chap. vii. 15. Besides, in the Syriac version, κατα ταξιν in this verse (chap. vii. 17,) is rendered *secundum similitudinem.*" *Macknight in Loc.*

This corresponds with the meaning of the Hebrew word used in the passage which is quoted. For דברתי means *the matters*, viz. those recorded of Melchizedek. Or, to adhere more closely to the usual signification of דבר, it may refer to *the words* of the oath, by which his ταξις *appointment* (from ταττω *ordino*) was confirmed.

† Αφοιμοιοω, similitudinem seu *formam* alicujus repræsento. Representing, or exhibiting, the form of the Son of God. *Scapula.*

was evident from the Scriptures, that "after the *similitude* of Melchizedek" there was to arise "another priest, made not after the law of a carnal commandment," as the priests of the order of Aaron were, "but after the power of an endless life." In this view of the Apostle's subject, the similitude of Melchizedek, in which the priest who is distinguished from the priests of the Aaronic order was to arise, is made to consist in "the power of an endless life," which the Messiah as the king of righteousness was to possess, and whereby he is enabled to give everlasting efficacy to his administration. This was secured to him by the oath of Jehovah, by which he was constituted a priest for ever. (Comp. chap. i. 10—12.)

In confirmation of the view we have taken of the import of that likeness which is said to subsist between the Divine Mediator and Melchizedek, as denoting not a difference of persons but a sameness of attributes; we may advert to similar expressions used by our Apostle in his other Epistles. Thus, in Philip. ii. 6, Christ is said to have been previously to his incarnation "in *the form* of God," or to have appeared with the glorious insignia of Deity: no one, however, but a Socinian, would infer from hence, that it was a being distinct from God who so appeared. Again, in the same verse it is added that "he counted

it no robbery to be equal with God,"* to appear in a Divine character. But no one surely will maintain that this implies a diversity of person. So also when the Apostle further states that our Lord, by his incarnation, "took on him *the form* of a servant," it by no means follows that he did not actually become the servant of Jehovah, to execute his will in the salvation of man.

But the following words of St. Paul approach nearer still to the phraseology adopted in speaking of Melchizedek; for he further says that Christ was "made *in the likeness of man;*"† and that, "being found *in fashion* as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." It is evident that, in this place, *likeness* does not mean some casual resemblance, but an identity of nature; and it is not unreasonable to say that in an identity of sacerdotal character, in those respects which the Apostle had specified, consisted the similitude which he ascribes to Melchizedek and the Son of God.

It is contended by Dr. Owen, in his commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews, that

* Ισα τω Θεω· See Parkhurst on the word ισος·

† Εν ομοιωματι ανθρωπων· The word ομοιωμα is from the same root, and of the same import, with that which the Apostle uses when he says that "another priest was to" arise *after the similitude* of Melchizedek. Comp. Rom. viii. 3.

Melchizedek could not be Christ himself in a prefiguration of his future humanity, because the Apostle had assumed, as an incontestible maxim, that " every high Priest is taken from among men;" and that therefore, our Lord could not have been then a priest, as Melchizedek is declared to have been, since he was not taken, or selected, from among men till he was born of the virgin. And the author appears to lay the main stress of his opposition to the divinity of Melchizedek on this argument. But would it not follow, by a parity of reasoning, that Christ could not have been a Saviour till after his incarnation, because it was essential to our salvation that he should become a partaker of human nature in order that he might suffer and obey for us? We know, however, that he was a Saviour by anticipation during the long period that preceded his advent; and what reason can be assigned, why he may not be called a priest also by anticipation? Was it not in the character of a priest that the ANGEL-JEHOVAH whose name is WONDERFUL, or was then *secret*, acted in the vision of Manoah and his wife? It appears to me that his ascent in the flame of the altar betokened that his own sacerdotal acts, there prefigured, were the medium of acceptance for every typical offering. It is, I believe, generally admitted, that every personal manifestation of Deity has been made by the second hypostasis

of the Triune Jehovah. The vision also which appeared to Daniel (chap. x. 5, &c.) was a vision of the Son of God, appearing in the costume of the Jewish High Priest. (Comp. Exod. xxviii. 4, 39. xxix. 5.) And if our Lord appeared to Daniel in his character of High Priest, assuredly he may be supposed to have appeared also to Abraham in the same character.

Though I consider the identity of person which I suppose to exist between "the king of righteousness and peace," "the priest of the most high God," spoken of in the narrative of Moses, and in the prophetic ode of David—and "the great High Priest of our profession," "the King of kings, and Lord of lords," the history of whose sacerdotal acts and royal Majesty forms the main subject of the narratives and prophecies of the Evangelists and Apostles,—to have been fully established by the arguments which have been already adduced; yet I am unwilling to leave, on a thesis so delightful as that to which this letter is devoted, any corroborative hints unnoticed which the Apostle's reasoning furnishes. I will therefore request your attention, for a few moments longer, to a part of that reasoning, contained in the fifth and sixth verses of chapter v. The argument thence arising is indirect, but it appears to me conclusive.

The Apostle, in the chapter to which I have referred, is proving the necessity of a Divine

appointment, or call, to a legitimate exercise of the sacerdotal office. He reminds the Hebrews that Aaron, the first of *his* order, had such a call; and he thence infers the necessity of a similar Divine appointment in the case of our Lord. That Christ had such an appointment, he demonstrates by a reference to those Scriptures, the inspiration of which the Hebrews acknowledged; and he produces from thence two texts which they regarded as speaking of their Messiah, in confirmation of his assertion that Christ "glorified not himself to be made an high priest," or did not by his own authority invest himself with that office.

The argument, then, which I add to those already produced, in support of my hypothesis that Melchizedek and Christ are to be identified, arises from the relation which these two texts bear to each other, and to the subject of which the Apostle is treating. Now the former of these announces the authoritative promulgation of an edict, whereby the Messiah is declared to be *the Son of God:* (Heb. v. 5. quoted from Psalm ii. 7.) the other recites an oath, whereby the same person is declared to be "a priest for ever." (ver. 6. quoted from Psalm cx. 4.) The *Son* in the former passage, is the *priest* in the latter, and the two terms must be equivalent in meaning, or the former quotation is nothing to the Apostle's purpose; the *sonship* of the one, is the *priesthood*

of the other, and the *begetting* in Ps. ii. 7, is of the same import with *the solemn designation to office*, recorded in Ps. cx. 4. But when did this sonship commence? When was our Lord set apart to his office? He answers the question himself in the viiith chapter of Proverbs: "I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was." He was "the Lamb slain," in the purpose of God, "from the foundation of the world;" and surely there could not be a sacrifice before there was a priest. And if he was a priest from the beginning, he was a priest after the order of Melchizedek, long before the interview with Abraham took place. But if Melchizedek was a mere man, how can an order, taking its rise from him, have existed before he himself was born? If the sonship and the priesthood, after the order or similitude of Melchizedek, are to be considered as contemporary in their origin (if indeed we may speak of time in referring to what took place before the world began) we must carry back the priesthood after the order of Melchizekek to a period long before the interview with Abraham; for he was the "appointed heir of all things" when "He made the worlds:" He is, in his official character, "the same yesterday, to day, and for ever." He began, virtually, to fulfil his high and important office of the ever-living Intercessor so soon as a necessity for his intercession arose; and it was by virtue of HIS

primogeniture, as "the first born of every creature," the first born of the many brethren, that sinners of the antediluvian period obtained acceptance with God. Unless, therefore, his priesthood have assumed different characters, it has been, from the time of the fall, a priesthood after the order, or according to the similitude of HIM who appeared to Abraham in confirmation of the character he before filled.

The attribute of "*perfection*" which the Apostle ascribes to the priesthood of Melchizedek, as contradistinguished from the imperfections of the Aaronic priesthood, will confirm the above view. For if Melchizedek were a mere man, how could perfection, either in personal character or official result, be ascribed to him or to his priesthood; or, in what respects could he have prefigured such perfection in the person and priesthood of Christ. The functionary, in this case, was himself a sinner, like those for whom he officiated, and, like the priests of the order of Aaron, must have offered sacrifice for himself. The fulfilment of his function could not put away sin as pertaining to the conscience, by furnishing an adequate satisfaction for its guilt. If Melchizedek, therefore, is to be considered only in the character of a type, that type which is introduced by the Apostle as one of most accurate application, is defective in conformity to its antitype in the very essential point which it

is introduced to illustrate, viz. a perfection of personal character and official result.

The attributes of Melchizedek and our Lord, associated in the Apostle's argument, are the same. Of Melchizedek *it is witnessed* that HE LIVETH,—of Jesus, that HE CONTINUETH EVER; whereas the Aaronic priests "*die*," "were not suffered to continue by reason of death." But in what part of the Old Testament Scriptures is the testimony, that Melchizedek LIVETH, to be found, unless it be referred to HIM in whom Job declared his faith as THE LIVING ONE, and who has assured us with his own lips that he had "life in himself."

Unless the priesthood of Melchizedek was constituted by oath, and his person constituted a priest for evermore, there seems another chasm in his supposed typical character; and *that* a chasm of the utmost detriment to the Apostle's reasoning. But as I have before observed, there is no evidence on record, that an earthly priest was ever so consecrated; while there is full evidence, the evidence of fact, that such a consecration, if it be supposed to have taken place, had effect only, like that of the Aaronic order, during the natural life of its subject. But the Apostle says that Melchizedek "abideth a priest continually," and that "it is witnessed of him that he liveth."

In the fourth verse of chapter vii. there are

two words supplied by our translators, *viz.* the noun and the verb. In the Greek there is only a masculine demonstrative pronoun. The noun with which it agrees is omitted, and the verb, to be supplied, may be either in the present or past tense as the context requires. Our translators, taking the Melchizedek of Genesis and the cxth Psalm for a mere man, have supplied the word "*man*" and have put the verb in the past tense.

But all objection arising from this verse to the Divine character of Melchizedek, will vanish, if we change the word "*man*" into *person*, and put the verb in the present tense. "Now consider how great this *person is*, &c." And you will observe that the preceding verb, at the close of the third verse, is in the present tense,—"He, Melchizedek, *abideth* a priest continually," or, for ever: and you will also notice that the participle passive, in the sixth verse, is the participle of the present tense, and is so rendered in our version. "He whose descent *is* not reckoned from them, *viz.* the sons of Levi, is the negative account the Apostle gives of the genealogy of Melchizedek.

And here, perhaps, it may strike you as an extraordinary circumstance, that the Apostle, in speaking of *a man* who lived and died long before Levi was born, should have remarked that his descent is not reckoned from Levi, especially as he was reasoning with persons who were as well

acquainted with the letter of the record as the Apostle himself was. But if he is speaking of Christ, in two different stages of his mediatorial existence, that which preceded and that which followed his incarnation; or rather, if he is speaking of his mediatorial life as "the same yesterday, to day, and for ever," reaching from the fall to the consummation of all things; then it was natural for him, in proving that the object of the Levitical institution was temporary and to be superceded by a new dispensation, and consequently by a priest of another order, to remind the Hebrews that that priest did not descend from Levi, but, as he afterwards states, "sprang out of Judah."

I might call your attention to the connexion of the relative pronouns in verses 6, 7, 8, 10, and 11, of chapter v; but on this I lay no stress, as the noun that immediately precedes the relative is not always its antecedent. I shall now therefore release you from a discussion, which, perhaps, has not produced the same interest in your mind as it has in that of your correspondent; for I can assure you, that I would not have occupied your time with it, if I had not myself found in the view which I have presented to you, what has been corroborative of my own faith and delightful to my own heart. Every instance of anticipation in those mediatorial offices which our Lord at his incarnation was to fulfil on behalf of sinners,

whether when he appeared as JEHOVAH, the personal WORD, to Abraham, the author and finisher of the patriarch's faith in himself, as JEHOVAH HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS; whether, to illustrate further the character of that seed in whom all nations were to be blessed, he assumed the name and functions of the great High Priest, in a vision with which that patriarch was favoured at a later period of his life; or, whether he manifested himself to Jacob, when, as the ANGEL JEHOVAH, he wrestled with the wanderer at Peniel, and granted him the blessing,—every such instance of anticipation affords a subject that is calculated to strengthen faith, to enliven hope, and to increase delight in HIM whose mercy is *from* everlasting *to* everlasting, and who, in his official acts of grace, was in the beginning, what he is now, and ever will be.

His priesthood is perfect. The atonement, intercession, and blessing, the three sacerdotal functions consigned to the Aaronic priests, but of which the levitical institution could afford only a shadowy representation, are all complete and effectual in the priesthood of Melchizedek. He removes guilt from the conscience, so as to leave no stain behind, by an application of the blood of his own sacrifice; he "ever liveth to make intercession for us;" and, at the appointed time, he will come forth from the sanctuary into which he is entered, to pronounce and give effect to the eternal benediction on all his people.

For these purposes "it is witnessed of Him that He liveth and abideth a priest for ever." As such "He was set up from everlasting," long before the time when he revealed himself to Abraham in the character of Melchizedek, the "priest of the most high God." The word of the oath by which he was consecrated, was anterior to the fall;* and its efficacy has been in a course of manifestation from that period, and will be continued till all power be put under his feet. Let us contemplate the description of this royal Melchizedekian priest, furnished by himself in his appearance to St. John, which we on whom the ends of the world are come, may employ for our own consolation, while we listen to his soul-reviving words: "Fear not, I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore; Amen, and have the keys of death and of hell."

I am, my dear friend,

Your's ever,

P. S. Since I wrote the above letter, I have met with the work of *Cunæus*, De Republicâ

* See Letter XIX.

Hebræorom, which I have cited largely in the notes; and also the reply made to it by *Fabricius* in his *Tractatus Philologico-Theologicus De Sacerdotio Christi juxta ordinem Melchizedechi.* In the latter I have, however, found nothing which has induced me to alter the opinion which I had before formed.

LETTER XXIX.

THE SYMBOLIC PARTIES IN THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I HAVE, I believe, more than once in the series of this correspondence referred to the awful vision vouchsafed to Abraham, and which is recorded in the xvth chapter of Genesis, as furnishing information on the subject of the patriarchal religion. This revelation made to Abraham, though the record concerning it is short, may, notwithstanding its brevity, afford us great light on the character of the first dispensation of evangelic truth, if we contemplate it in connexion with other similar visits from God to man. I shall therefore take the liberty of calling your attention more particularly to it.

The two parts into which the revelation of God to man is divided, commonly called the Old and New Testaments, are counterparts, the one of the other. The former affords predictive information respecting what *was to be done* for lost mankind; and the latter, is an historical detail of what *has been done* in the accomplishment of

that glorious undertaking. Jesus Christ, the Surety of the covenant, is the object of both; the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending.

If this connexion be admitted to subsist between the two component parts of Divine Revelation, the Bible must be its own best interpreter. If it be read with this clew, and with earnest prayer to its blessed Author for instruction in its wonderful contents, many apparently insurmountable difficulties in its interpretation will disappear. The covenant of Redemption, with its accomplishment in the person of Christ, is the master key that opens all the principal enigmas of this mysterious book, and discloses to view the unsearchable riches it contains. If the plan of "comparing spiritual things with spiritual" be humbly, patiently, and diligently pursued, with prayer to God that he would "open our understandings to understand the Scriptures," the glorious light of Gospel-Truth will shine, more and more, on a believer's mind, unto the perfect day. It is with this key, that I shall endeavour to open to you the nature and object of the revelation of grace made to Abraham to which I have requested your attention.

Abraham, whose interesting memoirs occupy so large a portion of the first book in the sacred code, and who fills so conspicuous a place in the list of worthies under the Patriarchal dispensation of the Gospel, was selected by Divine wisdom

and mercy to be the father of a chosen seed; the channel through which the pure stream of the true religion should flow down to distant posterity; and, ultimately, the parent stock from which the human nature of the Messiah himself, "the desire of all nations," the common Saviour of all, should spring. The great events, however, which were revealed to him as the objects of the Divine purpose, were, as to many of them at least, very remote, with respect to their actual accomplishment; and must have been viewed by the patriarch's eye of faith, as the stars which glimmer in the milky way, are seen through the astronomer's telescopic medium. Mountainous obstacles, insuperable by finite skill and power, arose to obstruct the introduction of those blessings, of which he was appointed the intermediate heir, till HE should appear who is more emphatically "appointed heir of all things." The first step in the progressive developement of the promises was embarrassed by apparent impossibilities. The birth of a son when the father was an hundred years old, and the mother ninety, in the then shortened state of human life, could take place only by a miracle. The future possession of Canaan by the seed of a man now well stricken in years,—a country extensive and populous, inhabited and fortified by warlike and powerful nations; his posterity to be strangers in a land not theirs, oppressed with servitude and

the iron hand of affliction four hundred years (ver. 13);—and after this to be made victorious over all their enemies, and brought into that good land which flowed with milk and honey: all these must have been prospects astonishing to the patriarch's mind; and not to stagger at the promises through unbelief, required a vigour of faith, which the Scripture celebrates as worthy of high admiration. But the grand promise, recorded chap. xii. 13, to which all the rest were subservient, that "In his seed all nations should be blessed," was a call for credit to the Truth of God, which far exceeded all the other demands on his faith in the veracity of Divine promises.

As Abraham's difficulties were great, it pleased God to afford him such remarkable means for the confirmation of his faith as scarcely any other saint ever enjoyed. Of this tendency were the several extraordinary manifestations which were occasionally vouchsafed to him; the wonderful interview with Melchizedek, King of Salem; the institution of circumcision; and the circumstances which attended the offering of Isaac his Son. We shall at present confine our attention to the memorable transaction described in Gen. xv. which I have before mentioned.

That the confirmation of Abraham's faith was the design of this awfully mysterious scene, is plain from the 8th and 9th verses. In the former of these, in consequence of the promise of Canaan

which he had just received, the patriarch asks, "Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?" In answer to this inquiry, the glorious Personage with whom he was conversing, directed him to "take an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtle dove, and a young pigeon. And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another; but the birds divided he not." It is carefully to be observed that these animals are the same, both in kind and age, which were afterwards appointed for sacrifices, and which had, in all probability, previously bled on the patriarchal altars from the beginning; which sacrifices were all types of "the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all." The correspondence that continually appears between the sacred rites of the patriarchal religion, and the ceremonies which were enjoined under the Sinaitic dispensation, affords a strong presumptive proof that there existed a revealed directory for the regulation of Divine worship from the beginning, which was carefully transmitted from Adam to his posterity. Without this supposition, indeed, the religious practice of the patriarchs must be classed with those instances of "Will Worship," of which God has always expressed his disapprobation.

The custom of dividing animals slain in sacrifice,

and of passing between their parts, in confirmation of a league or covenant, may be supposed to have originated on this occasion, as this is the first instance of it that occurs in the sacred history. But the rite, thus sanctioned, became common among all nations.* The act was an exhibition to the eye of the pledge implied or expressed in the solemnity of an oath. It was in the present instance, virtually saying, "*As I live*, I will fulfil the promises which I have made."

In this transaction, then, Jehovah condescended to confirm the patriarch's faith by a solemn rite which was afterwards a common mode of adjuration. "The smoking furnace, and the burning lamp," were a cone of fire in the midst of a smoky cloud. This, as hath been remarked in some of my past letters, was the common emblem of the Divine presence. For when the Lord marched before his people Israel, through the wilderness, this was the symbol, which assured them that He was with them; Exod. xiii. 21, 22: "The Lord went before them by day, in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way, and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light to go by day and night." It was not as I have before shown, two pillars, but one, which adapted itself to the circumstances of the day or the night. When

* Comp. Jer. xxxiv. 18, 19, 20.

Jehovah came down on Mount Sinai, Exod. xix. 18, "Mount Sinai was altogether in a *smoke*, because the Lord descended upon it *in fire*; and the *smoke* thereof ascended as *the smoke of a furnace*;" it resembled the cone of fire and cloud that proceeds from the mouth of a furnace. And at Solomon's dedication of the Temple, 1 Kings viii. 10, "It came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place, that *the cloud* filled the house of the Lord; so that the priests could not stand to minister because of *the cloud*: for *the glory of the Lord* filled the house of the Lord." This was the Shekinah that rested on the propitiatory in the most holy place between and over the CHERUBIM, marking, as I conceive in the clearest manner, the symbolic character of those images. (See also Exod. xvi. 7, 10. xxiv. 16, 17. xl. 34, 35. Lev. ix. 23. Num. xiv. 10. xvi. 19, 42. xx. 6. Comp. Acts. ii. 2, 3.) This glorious symbol of the Divine presence passed between the divisions of Abraham's sacrifices, to ratify the solemn covenant made in his favour, and just revealed to him. Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit, represented by this emblematic vision, thereby bound Himself by a new obligation to fulfil all his promises; not only as they regarded the immediate descendants of the patriarch and their possession of the earthly Canaan, but also and more especially as they had respect to the

advent of the Messiah, and the possession of the heavenly inheritance by all his spiritual seed.

It does not appear that the patriarch was a party to this federal transaction, since he was not directed to pass between the divided animals. The high contracting parties were "the ALEIM *of Abraham*," a name by which Jehovah delighted to be called. It consisted of unconditional promises, in which the patriarch, and all the heirs of his faith, are beneficially interested, through the mediation of one among the confederate persons, who is their Representative and Surety, under whom they claim its benefits, and in whom "all the promises are Yea and Amen to the glory of God the Father."

The Abrahamic dispensation may be considered as the third grand climacteric (if I may so speak) in the revelation of the covenant of mercy which had existed before time, ensuring the redemption of a lost world by Jesus Christ our Lord. The first was made at the period of the Fall; the second, immediately after the Flood; and the third on the call of Abraham; and on each of these renewals of the great Promise, visible confirmation of its truth was afforded to those who were its favoured recipients, on their own behalf and that of their posterity. At the appointed place of worship, the spot chosen for intercourse between a reconciled God and his guilty creatures, "on the east of Eden," *the Cone of fire and a*

cloud accompanied the institution of the symbolic worship which then began to be performed in order to keep up the expectation which had been kindled of the promised "Seed of the woman," THE JEHOVAH whom she exultingly thought she had borne when her first born Cain came into the world. After the flood *the Rainbow*, substantially the same symbol, though circumstantially varied in order that it might be adapted to the peculiar situation of the survivors from the recent catastrophe, became, by Divine appointment, "the faithful witness in heaven," *occasionally* testifying that God would in due time accomplish his engagements; while the other standing symbol, as we may fairly suppose from its appearance to Abraham and ever after, still dignified the place of religious congress chosen by Noah and his sons, as it had dignified that of Adam. And again, at the call of Abraham, the same symbol of the Divine presence passed through the divisions of the sacrificed victims, which the patriarch, by immediate revelation, had offered up to God. There were, in each of these dispensations of mercy, accompaniments of the grand promise of a Saviour in the provision made for the temporal comfort of mankind; but that Promise was the grand feature of them all. From that Promise those of a temporal nature, connected with it, originated; and from the former all the good, conveyed by the latter, arose.

That which is narrated in the 12th verse of Gen. xv. of what happened to Abraham preparatory to the Divine manifestation which was made to him, corresponds with other narratives of similar revelations. It is said that after Abraham had received directions respecting the sacrifices he was to offer on the occasion, and his compliance with those directions, "When the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and lo, an horrour of great darkness fell upon him." This account fully evinces that what is described as seen by the patriarch was *visionary*, * like the revelations made to Isaiah,

* *Dr. Jennings*, in his *Jewish Antiquities*, maintains that not only the symbol of the Divine presence was visionary, but that all which is related in the chapter, was transacted in a dream. His words are "To this class of impossibilities we may refer God's bringing Abraham abroad into the field, and showing him the stars, Gen. xv. 5; since it appears that it was not yet sun-set: 'when the sun was going down' it is said, 'a deep sleep fell upon Abraham,' ver. 12. From whence it is manifest that his going out before to view the stars, his ordering several living creatures for sacrifice, and his driving away the fowls that came down upon the carcases, were all performed in *prophetic vision* only; as indeed is intimated when it is said, 'the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision,' ver. 1.

Should we not understand by the Word of the Lord in this place the PERSONAL WORD, דבר יהוה, that Divine Personage through whom all communication between God and man appears to have taken place,—the *Revealer* of the Divine character and will to man. See also ver. 4, and 5; and comp. Matth. xi. 27. John i. 1, 18. 1 Sam. iii. 7, 21. xv. 10. et freq. "Let an impartial reader judge whether any of the Socinian author's senses can be applied to the word *Memra*, in *Onkelos* his

Ezekiel and St. John; and not an exhibition to his bodily senses, such as was afforded severally to Adam, and to Moses at the Bush, at Sinai, and in the Tabernacle. The darkness, natural and spiritual which accompanied the vision, corresponded with the intention of the revelation made, which was truly "light shining in darkness." The exhibition at Paradise was light enveloped by a cloud. The colours of the Rainbow are refractions from a dark cloud. The luminous appearance on Sinai was "in the midst of thick darkness." The feelings of the father of the faithful appear to have been, at the awful moment, in unison with the darkness which reigned around him. The natural darkness was necessary to *illustrate*, as contrasts do each other, the lamp or cone of fire, which, as the symbol of present Deity,—of Him whose name is LOVE, passed between the divisions of the sacrifice; and the tremendous awe which seized on the patriarch's mind, doubtless arising from a fearful conviction of the Divine majesty and purity, and a consciousness of his own sinfulness and that of the world, (comp. Is. vi. 5. Dan. x. 7, 8. Rev. i. 17.) was equally calculated to *illustrate* the spiritual truth, which the vision was intended to convey. That

Targum, Gen. iii. 8. They heard the voice of THE WORD of the Lord. And Gen. xv. 1, 5, 9, where THE WORD appeared to Abraham, brought him forth, and commanded him to offer a sacrifice to Him." *Altix's Judgment p.* 370.

truth may be explained in the words of St Paul, "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord:" it was, to adopt another view of the same Apostle, "A declaration of the righteousness of God," in the plan laid for his being "just, and the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." In like manner the supernatural eclipse of the material sun at the crucifixion of our Lord was in unison with the state of a *benighted* world, and with the "hour of" spiritual "darkness," through which the soul of the Divine Mediator was then passing; and all was preparatory to that morning when, at the resurrection of our Lord, the sun of righteousness arose, with healing in his wings or beams, to set no more.

In contemplating the revelation to Abraham, I must venture to ask, as *I* have asked in other instances, Is there no connexion to be formed in the mind between the glorious symbol of present Deity as seen by the patriarch, and "THE THREE WHO BEAR WITNESS IN HEAVEN, THE FATHER, THE WORD, AND THE HOLY GHOST," which THREE *are* "ONE"? Were not the three material symbols, *fire*, *light*, and *spirit*, present in the cone or pillar of fire and cloud? Was not their office that of witnesses or sureties for the fulfilment of Divine engagements? Is there not an exact correspondence perceptible between this and other revelations of the Divine purpose to

redeem the world, to which I have already led your attention?

Can I, my dear friend, forbear to remark to you, before I close my letter, the advantages which faith enjoys under our own dispensation? We have not to look, like the patriarchs, through a long vista of comparative darkness, illumined only by a pillar of fire in a cloud, towards the point where the sun of glory was expected to arise. But "the Lord is risen indeed," and hath given most incontestable evidence that all things which had been written in Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning him, have been accomplished in his complex person, his birth, death, resurrection and ascension. The situation of the patriarchs was like that of the Laplander, while, through a long and dreary winter, in which glimmering stars cast their feeble gleam on his almost perpetual snow, he is waiting for the return of the sun, on which depends all his future expectation of subsistence and comfort. (Heb. xi. 13.) In our more favoured era, "Lo, the winter is past,—is gone: the flowers appear on the earth, the time of woodland melody is arrived, and the voice of the Turtle is heard in our land: The fig-tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines, maturing their grapes, yield their fragrant odour." If our mental senses are restored to a capacity for spiritual enjoyment, we may find abundant anticipations of an everlasting summer.

If, indeed, we bury ourselves in the caves of the earth, searching there for treasures which the thief may steal from us, we lose, and we deservedly lose, all the blessedness that is to be found in communion with "the light of life:" it is no wonder that the flowers and harmony of "Paradise regained" afford us no delight. The loss is of our own creation. The cause lies in an abuse of the organs of vision, smell and hearing, and not in the absence of provision for their gratification.

O may that day be hastened, when the voice from the mercy-seat, the throne of mediatorial glory, shall address the descendants of Abraham the church of Israel, saying, "Arise, shine, (or, *marg.* be enlightened,) for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee;"—when all "the Gentiles shall come to her light, and kings to the glory of her rising" from the dust of a long spiritual death;—when "the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day when Jehovah shall bind up the breach of his people, and shall heal the wound which his stroke hath inflicted."

And may we, my dear friend, be citizens of that city, of which the Lord shall be the everlasting light, and her God her glory!

So prays your's affectionately,

LETTER XXX.

THE DIVINE VISIT TO ABRAHAM IN THE PLAINS OF MAMRE.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

A VARIETY of opinion has been formed on the subject of the Divine visit, made to Abraham when he dwelt in the plains of Mamre, which, with subsequent circumstances arising out of it, is recorded in chapters xviii. and xix. of the book of Genesis. The greater number of the Jewish writers, who have lived since Christians have employed this narrative in support of the doctrine of the Trinity, have maintained that Abraham's guests were mere men, and, perhaps, prophets from the neighbouring city of Salem, where Melchizedek is supposed to have reigned, sent for the purpose of predicting the conception of Sarah and the destruction of Sodom; and some have asserted that Shem, Heber, and some other unknown patriarch, were the three persons who visited Abraham. Others have considered them as the angels Michael, Raphael, and Gabriel, of whom they relate many fabulous and absurd stories.* The more ancient Jewish

* *Fabric. Christolog. Diss.* iv. *p.* 165, 6.

commentators, however, entertained a very different view of the narrative, as will appear from Philo Judæus, who, in reference to this vision, says, "These things being considered, it appears how God is Three, and yet he is but One." "He showeth how this was represented in that vision to Abraham," Gen. xviii. where it is said, ver. 1, that *Jehovah appeared to him,* and ver. 2, Abraham looked, and behold three men *stood by him:* yet he spake but to one, ver. 3, saying, *My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away I pray thee from thy servant,* &c.*

The opinion of Christian writers on the subject has varied. I am not however aware, that any of them have maintained that the three visitors to Abraham were *men* properly so called. The question among them has been,—whether the Three Personages were created angels, that is, unembodied finite spirits appearing in the assumed form of man; or,—whether two of them were such angels, and the other the Divine Angel of the covenant, so appearing; or,—whether the the three, though called men on account of the appearance, and angels on account of the office-character, which on this occasion they assumed, were representatives of the Triune Jehovah.

That there are difficulties attending a solution

* Quoted by *Allix* in his *Judgment of the Ancient Jewish Church.* Chap. x. *p.* 147.

of these questions, is not to be denied; and they are such as demand from an humble inquirer great modesty in giving an opinion concerning them. I must therefore, after stating to my friend what appear to me to be the features of the case, leave him to form his own decision on it.

The opinion of our church on the several questions I have stated, may be inferred from the appointment of Gen xviii., as the lesson to be read at Evening service on Trinity Sunday. No reason can be given for the selection of this chapter for that day, unless, as her first lesson for the Morning service, Gen. i, intimates a plurality of Persons in the Godhead, this be considered as intimating that that plurality is a Trinity.

That this is consonant to the doctrine of many among the Fathers of the Christian church, might easily be shown; and it has been maintained by many more modern commentators*

* Proinde ex hac JEHOVÆ apparitione sub trium virorum formâ, piè credidit Antiquitas apparnisse Abrahamo in specie visibili adorandam sacrosanctam Trinitatem. Videantur Augustinus *de Trinitate*, L. ii. C. 11, 12. et alii inter Patres citati Pareo in h. l. et Forbesio *Instruct. Histor. Theol.* L. i. Cap. xiv. Inter Recentiores Coccejus *Summ. Theol.* C. xi. Sect. 70. *de Fœder.* Sect. 321. et ad Hebr. xiii. Sect. 4. Mommæ *Œcon.* Lib. i. Cap. vii. Sect. 9. Witsius *Miscell.* Tom. 1. L. i. C. xvi. Sect. 16. et *Œcon*, L. iv. C. iii. Sect. 4. *et seqq.* Quibus nunc addo etiam Doctiss. Joan. Lightfootum, qui in *Chron.*

on the Scriptures. Among these I may mention *Wogan*, on the Lessons, &c; though I do not fully comprehend his self-consistency in considering one only of the three persons who appeared to Abraham as being possessed of Divinity, and the other two as created messengers; when, at the same time he affirms, that the threefold appearance was an image of the Divine Trinity. You shall however hear what he says, and then judge for yourself.

"It ought to be here observed, that this vision happened to Abraham immediately after receiving the seal of circumcision. And the appearance of *three* persons standing before him, was as plain a representation of the Holy Trinity, as that mystery would admit. That our church doth so understand it, is plain from her choice of this lesson upon this day. In like manner the same mystery was afterwards represented at our blessed Lord's baptism in the river Jordan. By both which we are led to understand, First, that admission into covenant with God, by the sacrament of his institution, is necessary to qualify us for the true knowledge of Him.* And, Secondly,

Temp. Vet. Test. in *h. l.* disertè scribit; *Tres Personæ Trinitatis cum Abrahamo prandent. Fabric. Christol. Diss.* iv. *p.* 167.

* What then was the knowledge of God, of JEHOVAH ALEIM, which Abraham had before obtained, by which he had been previously justified, and had glorified God? Is that knowledge which he previously enjoyed to be considered as erroneous and

that the true knowledge of God consists in a firm belief of the Blessed Trinity: even as stedfast a persuasion that there are Three Persons in the Godhead, as if we saw it with our eyes, and perceived it by our senses. But then, as only one of those who appeared to Abraham was the Lord, this teaches us that although there be three persons in the Holy Trinity, there is but one Lord, one God. This also is intimated to us by Abraham's addressing himself only to one of them, and saying, *My Lord, if I have found favour in thy sight, &c.*"

And again Mr. Wogan says, in commenting on ver. 10, "In the foregoing verse it is written, *They said unto him, &c.* as if all joined in the question and kind inquiry after Sarah: but here one only speaks, and He the Lord, as appears by the sequel; *He said, I will certainly return, &c.* By this change of the number from plural to singular, we may learn two things. First that

heterodox, or essentially defective? Of what was circumcision *the seal*, but of the truth of information and promises before vouchsafed? And it may be further asked, had our blessed Lord no "true knowledge of God," till after his baptism in Jordan?—If the pious author had said, that admission into covenant with God, by the sacrament of Divine institution, is necessary, as the appointed and ordinary means of establishing faith and hope in God's promises, he would have expressed himself after a manner justified by Scripture and by the tenets of our Scriptural church. "How was faith reckoned to Abraham for righteousness? When he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision." Rom. iv. 10.

the blessed Trinity is both plural and singular; both he and they: one and more than one. In some respect, namely of personality, we may speak of God as of many. So speaks St. John, 'These three are one;' but, in respect to essence, we are ever to think and speak of Him as one. Secondly, that whereas, in fact, the two angels accompanying the Messiah were no more than creatures, and He truly and properly God, we are to understand it was He, and not they in conjunction with him, that promised Abraham a son. And it is observable, that He promised in such a form of words, as shows the blessing was an act of power purely Divine, and peculiar to the Divine Person who spake them. *I will return according to the time of life, and Sarah* (by virtue of such returning) *shall have a son.*"

Again, in commenting on ver. 16—22, the author says, "From this passage we may infer the three offices of the Sacred Persons of the Holy Trinity. It is an old observation of the Rabbins among the Jews, that whenever more angels than one appeared at a time, they were present for several purposes; and particularly, 'That these angels who came to Abraham, were sent for three things; the first to show glad tidings to Abraham, that Sarah should bear Isaac; the second angel was sent to deliver Lot from the overthrow of Sodom; the third angel was sent to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah.' So

that by this are denoted, in some measure, the special offices of the Three Divine Persons in the Holy Trinity; the Father as author of our being; the Son, as Saviour, or author of our well being; the Holy Ghost, as fire, consuming all that resist his will; all that refuse to be purified by him."*

* *Wogan on the Lessons.* TRINITY SUNDAY.

In a note at the close of the chapter the pious author adds, "That all the visible appearances of God, which occur in the Old Testament, were the appearances of the Son, or Second Person in the Holy Trinity, was the general and received opinion of the church in the most primitive times. It is hoped the following citation from Prudentius, a Christian poet, who flourished about the fourth century, will not be unacceptable to the reader, as it cites the vision to Abraham, to which our lesson relates.

Quisque hominum vidisse Deum memoratur, ab ipso
Infusum vidit gnatum; nam Filius hoc est,
Quod de Patre micans se præstitit inspiciendum,
Per species quas posset homo comprendere visu.
Nam mera majestas est infinita, nec intrat
Obtutus, aliquo ni se moderamine formet.
Hoc vidit princeps generosi seminis Abram,
Jam tunc dignati terras invisere Christi
Hospes homo, in triplicem Numen radiâsse figuram.

Which may be thus Englished.

"Where'er it's mentioned in the sacred code,
That human eye beheld the form of God,
This notes the Son, the Son of God Most High,
Whose form was manifest to mortal eye.
Pure Deity our faculties transcends:
No eye can see, no reason comprehends.

But let us consider the words of the record for ourselves. In the two first verses of the chapter, we read: "And," (or, perhaps rather, *Again,)** JEHOVAH *appeared* unto him in the plains of Mamre; and he sat in the tent door, in the heat of the day: and he lift up his eyes, and looked, and behold THREE MEN stood by him: and when he saw (them,) he ran to meet *them* from the tent door, and *bowed himself towards the ground*, And said, My *Lord*, if now I have found favour in *thy* sight, pass not away I pray *thee* from thy servant." There is, I conceive, a strong presumption in favour of the hypothesis which maintains that these three human appearances represented the Persons of the Godhead in the first glance of this narrative: for it is said that JEHOVAH *appeared* to Abraham; and then the historian adds, as if to explain how he appeared, that THREE MEN stood by the patriarch; for I understand the objective pronoun *him* as rehearsing Abraham, who in the

But that to man God might this truth disclose,
A shape, to sight conspicuous, he chose.
Displayed to *Abram* this appearance was,
Abram the founder of the chosen race.
'Twas this the hospitable man did see
Beneath the shade of *Mamre's* hallowed tree,
But in the number of three guests Divine,
The sacred TRIAD did mysterious shine."

* Iterum, rursus, porro, postea. See, *Noldius in* ℸ *p.* 285, 288, 289.

preceding comma is said to have lifted up his eyes and looked. To *the Three Persons*, whoever they were, he paid the token of respect which is mentioned, (whether of civil or Divine homage is afterwards to be considered;) for it is said that "he ran to meet *them*, and bowed himself towards the ground." The copulative must carry forward the objects whom the patriarch saw, and ran to meet, and constitute them the objects of the prostration which followed.

There is a similar appearance of connexion in verses 21, 22. *And Jehovah said, "I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not I will know.*" And then it is added immediately, as if relating the execution of the foregoing determination, AND or *Then the men*, namely, two of the three as afterwards appears, *turned their faces from thence and went towards Sodom; but Abraham stood yet before Jehovah.* Now as there were *three* men who appeared to Abraham, and there were only *two* who visited Lot, and no account is given of the third, unless he be identified with Jehovah in whose presence Abraham remained after the departure of the two towards Sodom; and as the departure of the two appears to be the execution of the determination of Jehovah to make a personal inspection into the case on the spot—*I will go down*, says the Divine Speaker, and the his-

torian adds, *And the men departed;* does it not seem necessary to identify, in some respect, the speaker and the agents in fulfilling what had been spoken?

I should certainly have concurred in the generally prevailing opinion, that one of the three was distinguished as Jehovah by some marks of Divinity, such as usually characterized the Angel of the covenant when he appeared to man before his incarnation, had not the same title and attributes been ascribed to one of the other two; for Abraham, according to our version, uses the singular number in his address, though he had prostrated himself before all the three persons. But since this ascription is made, I am disposed to think that the word אדני is the plural in regimine, with the pronominal suffix; that the various reading which gives the following pronouns in the plural number,* and which is sanctioned by the Samaritan version, is the true reading;—and that the patriarch addressed all the Three Persons when he invited them to stay and take refreshment at his tent.

That one of the Three Personages was Jehovah is placed beyond all doubt; for the incommunicable name is given to one of them not less than ten times† in the course of the chapter;

* עבדכם-תעברו-בעיניכם.

† It may be remarked that, when Abraham addresses the Divine Visitant, he calls him אדני, while the historian constantly

and the promise, authoritatively repeated, that Sarah should have a son, identified the Promiser in this chapter with JEHOVAH who, in chapter xii. 2, 7, appeared to the patriarch, and then originated the promise of a seed; and with THE ALEIM who, in chapter xvii. 19, renewed that promise; and with Jehovah, of whom we read in chapter xxi. 1, that "JEHOVAH visited Sarah *as He had said;* and JEHOVAH did unto Sarah *as He had* spoken."

The only question that remains to be solved is this, whether the two persons, called men and angels who went towards Sodom,* were personifications of created or uncreated angels; whether they represented finite intelligences from the heavenly world, or the Supreme ALEIM. I say whether they were personators and representatives of the former or the latter; for no one will suppose that the forms which appeared were themselves the one or the other. Whether the first hypothesis or the second be maintained, it

calls him יהוה. See verses 13, 14, 17, 20, 22, 23; and the same word אדני is rendered in our own version, and also in the Greek and the Chaldee, as being in the plural number, in the following chapter, when Lot addresses the two angels. LXX Κυριοι.

* The demonstrative article is prefixed to the word *angels* as applied to those who went to Sodom, chap. xix. 1, both in the Hebrew and in the LXX version, identifying them with the angels with whom Abraham had conversed, chap. xviii. 8. They are called *angels* chap. xix. 1 and 15; and *men* in ver. 10 and 16.

must be premised that the visible forms called *men*, were only personators of beings in themselves invisible as being unembodied spirits.

Now the arguments from chapter xviii, which are adduced to prove that the personage to whom Abraham addressed himself was a DIVINE Person may, many of them at least, be urged to prove that one of those with whom Lot conversed, chapter xix, was also a DIVINE Person. And if it can be proved that two of the three were such, it will not be doubted that the third was such also. No objection can arise to the co-equality of these persons with the Jehovah of the former chapter, from the title of *angels* which is given them, since the name is one descriptive of office and not of nature, and since all the three are denominated *men;* that is, they were such in appearance. Nor, I conceive, can the 13th verse, where the two speak of themselves as *sent* create any difficulty, since the very title of angels which is given them, implies a mission, and a mission from the Father is continually attributed both to the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Let us remark the close resemblance that exists between Lot's address to one of the two who appeared to him at Sodom, chap. xix. 19, and Abraham's address to Jehovah, chap. xviii. 3. Abraham said, "If now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee from thy servant." Lot addressed the angel, who had bid

him to escape for his life, &c., "Oh, not so, my Lord. Behold now thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou hast showed unto me in saving my life." Chap. xix. 19. The question which arises from the comparison is this, whether the language of Lot can be supposed proper in addressing a fellow-creature however superior to himself? "Thou hast magnified thy mercy in saving my life." If the angel were a created one, it was the mercy of Jehovah, and not his own that was thus magnified; and it was Divine interposition, and not that of the instrument, that saved the life of Lot, and to which the honour of that salvation was due. There is nothing to intimate that the angel acted instrumentally; nor, if the angel did so act, is there any reserve of glory for Him whose instrument he was.

Again: the remarkable resemblance that appears between Abraham's intercession for Sodom in his intercourse with Jehovah, and the intercession of Lot with the angel for the preservation of Zoar, cannot but strike the attentive reader of the two chapters. The former is recorded chap. xviii. 23—32. The latter, recorded in chap. xix. 20, 21, is as follows: "Behold, now, this city is near to flee unto, and it is a little one. Oh, let me escape thither, (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live." And he, the angel to whom Lot addressed himself, said unto him, "See I

have accepted thee concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow this city for which thou hast spoken." Surely this cannot be the language of a delegated servant, of one sent to perform a work in which he could have no option of acting otherwise than his commission directed. "*I* have accepted thee "—" *I* will not overthrow the city." Had he not possessed the right of destruction or salvation, he would have said, "Jehovah hath heard thy prayer, and will spare the city." But he speaks in his own name without any reference to a superior. He acts by his own authority, as the hearer and answerer of prayer,—as the arbiter of life and death.

I lay no stress on the prostration of Abraham to the three whom he saw, nor on that of Lot to the two who became his visitors; because the term is applied to denote civil reverence as well as Divine honour. Besides, I think it very doubtful whether Abraham or Lot knew, *at first*, that their guests were more than fellow-men, till their words and acts proved their real character.

But there is yet a remarkable passage in chap. xix. which remains to be taken into the account. At ver. 24, the historian of the facts states that "THE LORD (Jehovah) rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire, FROM THE LORD, (Jehovah) out of heaven." Why was this remarkable phraseology employed, unless it were

intended to intimate that the personator of Jehovah who was conversing with Lot, the executor of every Divine operation, in creation, redemption, and judgment, was one in essence with Jehovah who hath his throne in heaven? To say, as it has been said, that the historian's language means no more than that this storm came from Jehovah Himself, or that the storm was a very heavy one, or that it came from heaven, is a very unsatisfactory elucidation of the phrase; and the supposed parallel passages which have been produced in support of these several interpretations of the phraseology of Moses, do not correspond with it. The angel who promised to spare Zoar at Lot's intercession in the 21 verse, and who in ver. 22, hastened Lot's escape, seems to be the same personage to whom under the name of Jehovah, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is attributed in ver. 24. *

* *Pluit Dominus a Domino* [Variè exponunt.] 1. *A Domino,* h. e. *a seipso,* vel cœlitus, ut Hebræi exponunt, dicentes esse משחן יהוה elegantiam linguæ, sicut Gen. iv. 23, *uxores Lamech,* i. e. meæ, 1 Reg. i. 33. *servos Domini vestri,* i. e. mei, Ester viii. 8. *in nomine regis* i. e. mei. .... *A Domino* emphaticè dicitur, *a seipso* pluit, vi et potentiâ propriâ, non usitato naturæ ordine. Vel ad auxesin pertinet, *Pluit pluviam,* (in verbo inclusum est verbale) a *Domino,* i. e. magnam, copiosam, ut *flamma Domini,* i. e. luculenta. 2. Al. sic, Pluit *(pluere fecit* est in Heb.) יהוה, i. e. Angelus personam Dei sustinens, *a Domino* i. e. potestate sibi Divinitus concessâ *De cœlo;* sic Luc. xvii. 29. *de aere.* 3. Nostri hinc Trinitatem colligunt, collatis Psalm cx 1. *Dixit Dominus Domino meo,* et Psal. xlv. 6, 7. *Sedes*

Besides, a comparison between verse 13 and verse 39 seems to intimate, that the two angels who say "We will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before Jehovah, and Jehovah hath sent us to destroy it," are the same persons who are spoken of as the destroyers of Sodom and the deliverers of Lot. In the latter verse we read, "It came to pass when the ALEIM destroyed the cities of the plain, that the ALEIM remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow when he destroyed the cities in the which Lot dwelt." The plural name of God so commonly used, but which, I believe, does not before appear in the course of this narrative, and which, as introduced at the close of it, appears from its connexion to have an immediate reference to the covenant of redemption revealed to Abraham, may, perhaps, confirm the view we have taken of the three symbolic personages whom Abraham saw. The two angels say "WE will destroy this city," ver. 13. The brimstone and fire which were the means of its destruction were rained "by Jehovah from Jehovah," ver. 24. And that destruction, in ver. 29, is described as the act of THE ALEIM, the three

tua, Deus, in seculum; propterea unxit te Deus, Deus tuus. Sic ergo exponunt: Pluit Filius (cui Pater omne judicium commisit, Joh. v. 22.) a Patre, qui per filium operatur, Joh. v. 19. *Poli Syn. in locum.*

co-equal and co-eternal Persons in the one Jehovah.

The difficulty of accommodating these representations to each other, on any other view of the subject than that which has been submitted to your consideration, has obliged commentators to suppose, without the shadow of authority from the text, that, when Jehovah left off talking with Abraham, he joined the angels at Sodom. But this is supposed merely for the sake of relieving an imaginary difficulty.

I shall now lay before you what the learned *Witsius* has written on this subject. * "Among the other appearances" (viz. to Abraham, which the author had enumerated in the preceding page) "that mentioned Gen. xviii. 1, is very eminent; where it is said that *Jehovah appeared unto Abraham*, and ver. 2 it is immediately subjoined, that he saw three men: whence the pious ancients † concluded, that the adorable Trinity appeared to Abraham in a visible form."...."We indeed acknowledge that the church has stronger arguments to establish this fundamental article of our faith; yet we imagine the pious zeal of the Fathers on this subject is on no account to be exploded. The text affords them wherewith to defend them-

* Economy of the Covenants, B. iv. chap. iii.

† In proof of this he quotes *Ambrose, Augustine, Paschalius*, &c. and others cited by *Forbes, Instruct. Hist. Theol. Lib.* i. *c.* 14.

selves. And why should we so far gratify our adversaries, as to go about to overturn no contemptible reasons for the truth? First, we are to observe that after Moses had said, ver. 1. *And Jehovah appeared to him,* he immediately adds, ver. 2. *and he lift up his eyes, and looked, and lo three men stood by him.* Which words really seem to contain the explication of the manner in which God appeared to Abraham. Nor should it be thought unsuitable, that even the Father and the Holy Spirit appeared in human form; for ..... Daniel also saw the Ancient of days sitting on a throne, and another, like the Son of man who came to Him, Dan. vii. 9. 13; which interpreters commonly explain of the Father and the Son, and, as I think, not improperly.

"It is added, that, when three men appeared to Abraham, one of them is constantly called JEHOVAH, ver. 13, 17, 20, &c. and the others *angels,* Gen. xix. 1, sent by Jehovah to destroy Sodom, ver. 13. Because the name *angel,* cannot agree to the Father, who is never sent; but may to the Son and Holy Spirit who are sent by the Father, *Augustine* says well, *Lib.* ii. *de Trinitat. c.* 13, 'Though I do not recollect that the Holy Spirit is any where called an angel; yet it may be gathered from His office. For of Him it is said, He will communicate, or declare unto you things to come; and certainly angel is

interpreted messenger; but we very evidently read concerning our Lord Jesus Christ in the Prophet, that he is called the angel of the covenant; though both the Holy Spirit and the Son of God is God and Lord of angels.' Nor does Epiphanius differ in his sentiments, *in Ancorato* 70. 'For as the Son is the angel of the covenant, so also the Holy Spirit.' But that those angels which Lot saw were not ministering spirits, may be gathered from the religious honour which he paid them, Gen. xix. 18, 19, &c.; and the answer full of authority and Divine Majesty, they gave, ver. 21. What some pretend, that in the mean time a third Person intervened, who had remained with Abraham and to whom these words are to be applied, is what is not in the text, nor do I see how it can be proved.

"It does not militate against this interpretation that these angels are expressly distinguished from Jehovah the Father, ver. 13. They are, indeed, distinguished from Jehovah the Father, not essentially, as we have shown, but hypostatically or personally. Nor is it below the dignity of an uncreated angel to say, *I shall not be able to do any thing, till thou be come thither*, ver. 22, because that was said on the supposition of a gracious decree and a promise already made to Lot. And this expression should be compared with John v. 19, 20. And, lastly, Heb. xiii. 2 is but foolishly objected; for the Apostle there recommends

hospitality on this account; namely, that *some have entertained angels unawares;* whereas, if God himself had been entertained, that consideration should rather have been urged.—But it is not for us to prescribe to the Holy Spirit, what arguments or expressions he is to make use of. If the Apostle had thought fit to say that Jehovah Himself was entertained, he might certainly have done it, seeing Moses expressly asserts it.* And now, when he speaks of angels, he, in like manner, imitates Moses, who declares that angels turned in to Lot. But seeing the term *angel* signifies diverse things, and may be applied both to an uncreated and to a created angel; therefore from the bare appellation *angel* it cannot be proved that the discourse only regards created angels. Moreover when he says, that some entertained angels unawares, he again has an eye to Lot, who, inviting them to come under his roof, imagined they were some honourable guests, till, from their talk or by the inspiration of the Spirit, he understood who they really were. Nor is it any objection that the Apostle says, in the plural number, that *some* entertained angels. For an enallage or change of number is frequent in such ways of speaking, and it is probable that what

* Chap. xviii. 1—8. *Jehovah appeared to Abraham,* was invited to stay and take refreshment, and accepted the invitation.

happened to Lot, happened also to many others.* And now let it be sufficient to have said these things, in favour of the explication of the ancients, and of other very excellent Divines of the Reformed Church. Nor do I imagine that equitable judges will blame me for having attempted to show, that those pious and learned men neither spoke inconsiderately, nor, by their arguments, did any prejudice to the good cause they undertook to maintain. But should any one think otherwise, it is not our province to contend with him. We shall use much stronger arguments than these with such a person."

I perfectly agree with the learned author whom I have quoted, that we have stronger arguments, wherewith to establish the great fundamental article of our faith, the doctrine of the Trinity; and should be sorry to build its truth on the foundation afforded by these chapters. But in such a review of the patriarchal theology, as my correspondence with you professes to take, it seemed improper to pass by this remarkable manifestation to the father of the faithful; and in the notice I felt constrained to take of it, I have suggested the interpretation of the Divine appearance which approved itself the most to my own mind. But, as I have before said, there are difficulties on every hypothesis which has been

* It had happened to Abraham just before.

that in applying the word *person* to the doctrine of the Trinity, we do not use it in its common acceptation as expressing that distinct and separate existence which one being possesses independently of others. For this would annihilate the unity of the Godhead. We only mean by this expression that the distinctions of the Godhead spoken of in Scripture under the titles of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are not the attributes or qualities of Deity; but that they are, in a certain mysterious and wonderful manner, subsistencies, or persons, in one Jehovah: or, in plainer words, that the Father is not the Son, nor the Son the Father, nor the Father or Son the Holy Ghost; but that each, being Himself God, and not an attribute of God, these Three Persons subsist in co-essentiality and co-equality. *

I observe once more that, when we speak of a threefold subsistence in Deity, we do not mean to say that God is three and yet one in the same respect. This is an absurdity and impiety which is charged on believers in the Triunity of the Godhead for the purpose of exciting prejudice against a fair and impartial consideration of the doctrine; and intimates an inability to answer

* The word person, or persona, renders the Greek word προσωπον 2 Cor. iv. 6. The Greek word προσωπα renders the Heb. פנים, and פנים is frequently used to describe the distinctions in the cherubic figure.

the plain and convincing arguments which the Scripture furnishes in its support.

And now, my dear friend, I conclude my letter by recalling to your consideration and my own the importance and advantage of *studying* the volume of Divine Revelation. Its truths are "more to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold." Much of this treasure lies hid under the surface; and it is not to a superficial but to the laborious inquirer that the Scriptures disclose their latent riches. In order to be successful students, the knowledge of Scripture-truth must be our chief object of pursuit. We must give ourselves wholly to it. And conscious of our own ignorance, we must seek instruction from Him who alone can open our understandings to understand the Scriptures.

And oh, my friend, what motives to humiliation and admiration and gratitude arise before us, while we contemplate the condescension of Jehovah in conversing with sinful men. That "the High and lofty one who inhabiteth eternity whose name is holy," should stoop so low, is what could not have been believed, if He had not Himself revealed it. He visited the patriarchs of old in the appearance of man. Those occasional visits have become a permanent residence. "God was in Christ;" and that nature which he once assumed on earth, he hath translated to the throne of Glory. Thither he has promised to translate his redeemed:

and in the interval he says, "I *dwell* with him that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."

I am, my dear friend,

Your's most truly,

LETTER XXXI.

THE OFFERING OF ISAAC.

MY DEAR FRIEND.

In an attempt to prove that the religion of the Son of God has been that of all ages, not excepting the patriarchal period, and that the Gospel of Christ has afforded to fallen man his only hope from the beginning; the wonderful instance of faith, recorded in the life of the patriarch Abraham, and consisting in the virtual sacrifice of his only son, demands a prominent station. And whether we consider this extraordinary act as showing his acquaintance with the way of salvation provided for sinful man, or as evidence of the effect of faith in a renewed heart, it is truly worthy of our closest attention. The record of the transaction is found in the 22nd chapter of the book of Genesis, and is appointed by the church of England as the first lesson in her morning service on her great day of commemorative atonement, as being typical of that unspeakable act of Divine compassion which is prophetically described in the proper psalms selected for the occasion, and in the first

lesson for her evening service, the 53d of Isaiah; and which is, historically and doctrinally, the subject of her second lessons, and of her Epistle and Gospel for that day.

Of this wonderful transaction it has been observed, that the like is not to be found in Scripture; for we see therein the God of infinite truth requiring, without any breach of his fidelity, the removal by death of that person who had been constituted the organ of fulfilling the promises of salvation made to the human race;—the God of infinite justice requiring, without any taint of injustice, the effusion of the blood of a son, whose piety and filial obedience were unquestionable: we see a father intending to offer as an holocaust his only son, without being chargeable with cruelty, aiming a blow at the throat of that son without any defect of natural affection, and purposing to reduce his body to ashes without any imputation of impiety either towards God or his child.

St. Paul has epitomised the narrative of Genesis in his epistle to the Hebrews, chap. xi. 17—19. He says, "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and he that had received the promises, offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said that in Isaac shall thy seed be called: accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure."[o] There are also

other allusions to the narrative in the epistles of St. Paul, which we shall have to notice.

It is said in the introduction of the record, that "God did *tempt* Abraham," or bring the faith which he had given him to a test of its existence, purity, and vigour. In this statement the manner in which both the author and subject of the temptation are characterised in the original Hebrew, is worthy of special notice. The word "God" or ALEIM, has the emphatic particle* prefixed to it, and might be rendered THE ALEIM *themselves* originated this trial of Abraham's faith. *The Divine Covenanters* who had pledged themselves to effectuate human salvation by means of this very son, who had promised, (and had confirmed that promise by oath) that Isaac should be a principal link in the chain of the blessed Seed, demanded the sacrifice in which Abraham was required to act as the sacerdotal offerer. There is also an emphatic particle prefixed to the proper name Abraham, which, though unnoticed in our translation, is full of meaning.† The subject of the temptation was that very person to whom the promises were made. To this the Apostle seems to refer in saying, "Abraham when he was tried, offered up Isaac, and he," that very father, *who had*

* Gen. xxii. 1. ה-אלהים

† את-אברהם

received the promises, "offered up his only begotten son."

The faith of Abraham had been previously subjected to a variety of tests; * but this, the last, was the most severe. His faith had advanced towards maturity under the discipline of former trials; and now, when it could bear what may be truly called "a fiery trial," was put, if we may so speak, into a crucible of experiment, "heated ten times more than it was wont to be heated," and came from it proved and purified to the utmost. Thus his "faith being much more precious than gold that perisheth, though it be tried by fire, will be found to praise, and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." In the interval it has been exhibited as a pattern to all his spiritual posterity, and has redounded to the glory of HIM, who was both its *author* and its *object*.

The person, then, who was brought to this severe trial of faith was Abraham, who had "received the promises," temporal and spiritual, of which we read in the accounts recorded by Moses in the several Divine manifestations vouchsafed to him, which promises were centered in Isaac as the first link in their fulfilment. God had promised to be his shield, and his exceeding

* Perhaps this is referred to in the record when it says, "*After these things* God did tempt Abraham.

great reward—to be ALEIM, or God in covenant, to him and to his seed for ever—to give the land of Canaan for an inheritance to his posterity by Isaac,—that he should become a great nation, and that in his Seed other nations, even all the nations of the earth, should be blessed. These promises he had embraced by faith, so as to depend fully on their accomplishment.*

The words in which this trial of Abraham's faith was proposed to him, are very remarkable. "Take now thy son—thy only son—Isaac, whom thou lovest," and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him up for a burnt-offering on one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." Gen. xxii. 2. Every word was a dagger to the patriarch's heart. Let us consider them in detail, and mark the gradation of afflictive circumstances in this extraordinary requisition.

The victim required was his *son*. The patriarch had two sons, of one of whom it had been said, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called." (Heb. xi. 18. Comp. with Gen. xxi. 12.) Had the life of Ishmael been required, the trial had been lighter, since to Isaac the promises, temporal, spiritual, and eternal, were all limited; and since, on this account, as well as on account of the various wonderful circumstances attending the

* This seems to be implied in St. Paul's compound verb. Αναδεχεσθαι plus est quam δεχεσθαι. *Grotius*.

birth of Isaac, and his own dutiful behaviour, he must have been much dearer to his parent's heart. Further, the victim is characterised as the patriarch's "*only* son." He was the *only* son left to him after Ishmael's ejection, by Divine command, from his family—the only son of Sarah his lawful wife—his only legitimate seed. Ishmael is spoken of as a servant, having been born of a mother in a servile condition of life, whereas Isaac was, in every sense, his son. Add to all this that he was the child of promise, for whose birth the anxious father had waited for many years, a son born out of the usual course of nature. He was *the* seed through whom the blessing of salvatiom was to be derived to Abraham and to the world. (Comp. Rom. ix. 6—9.)

In the gradation of endearing circumstances ascribed to the victim demanded, the name of *Isaac* is introduced—"Isaac, whom thou lovest." Oh, how this must have pierced the parent's heart! What is said of Jacob, in relation to Joseph (Gen. xliv. 30) may be said also of Abraham in relation to Isaac, that "his life was bound up in the lad's life." Every affectionate parent is able, in some little measure to appreciate the crucifixion of feeling which such a demand must have occasioned; but unless we were placed in the same circumstances in which the patriarch was, it is impossible for us fully to know

the extent of his sufferings, or the strength of the principle which overcame them. Isaac was not only dear to his father's soul by bonds of natural affection; but he was, as it were, the great pledge which God had given him of *His* love, the pledge of all the blessings he expected from it. *Isaac*, the son of laughter, became indeed a *Benoni*, a son of sorrow.*

But what was the direction which Abraham received? Was it, in its letter, like any of those communications which he had before received from the source of grace and love from which it proceeded? On the contrary, it seemed a direct contrast to those communications, and irreconcilable with them. How mysterious to carnal reason, and even to a weak faith, must the command given to Abraham have been! "Take now thy son, thine only son, Isaac whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt offering on one of the mountains which I will tell thee of."

The terms of the command are sacrificial and Abraham well understood them. They describe the awful process of expiation by blood. The victim was first to be seized, then taken to the altar, bound and laid on it, after which the knife was to be applied to its throat, and its body consumed to ashes. In the case of an irrational

* There is an emphasis in the Apostle's manner of introducing the required victim: Τον Ισαακ, τον μονογενη·

victim, the process was very affecting; but in that of a human victim, a son, an only son, a beloved Isaac, the heir of promise and the channel of all Divine blessing, who can comprehend the feelings which such a requisition must have excited!! But the requisition was too positive and peremptory to admit of hesitation or delay.* Abraham knew the authority from which it was derived; and, as we shall hereafter see, he knew also the hidden mystery which the tremendous process involved. This, and this only, could have reconciled him to obedience in the performance of such an act as that which was required of him.

The age of Isaac at the time when this offering was required, is a subject that involves great difficulty, and a variety of opinion has been formed upon the subject. Perhaps more may be said in support of that which has been espoused by our learned Lightfoot,† than of any

* לך לך Go, Go; or, go without hesitation or delay. This repetition of the imperative verb seems more probably to be the sense of the passage, than that of our translation and of some commentators, who take the second word to be the pronoun personal of the second person with the preposition ל prefixed.

† *Chron. Tempor. Vet T. cap.* 21 *and* 22. *Oper. Tom.* i. *p.* 14. So also *Estius,* quoted by *Poole* in his *Synopsis.* Probabile est Isaacum, cujus oblatio illustris erat typus oblationis Christi, in eo etiam cum antitypo convenisse, ut circa annum 33 offeretur.

This hypothesis of Lightfoot meets no objection in the term נער, applied to Isaac in the 18th verse, as appears by the application of this word in a variety of other instances.

other. He supposed Isaac to be about thirty-three years of age at the time of this transaction, and he founded his supposition on a correspondence between the type and antitype in respect of age, such a correspondence being found to have existed in so many other circumstances. It must, I think, be admitted that Isaac was of an age to judge of the reasonableness of submission to the Divine authority of Him who required his life, and that he voluntarily yielded himself to the will of God revealed to him by his father. That he might have escaped from his aged father, or have resisted the execution of his design, can hardly be made a question. It is certain that he understood the rite of sacrificature; for he conversed with his father on the subject. It is also certain that he had attained a sufficient age to have strength for carrying the wood that was necessary for consuming the offering of himself, which could not have been a burden of light weight.

It is a circumstance of no trifling aggravation in the requisition Divinely made of the father of the faithful, that Sarah his wife was alive at the time. For what reproaches might he not expect from a mother's fondness after such an act. But he consulted not with flesh and blood. The command was clear, the authority was paramount, and he obeyed.

St. Paul has pointed out the principle on which

Abraham acted in this astonishing instance of self-denying obedience. It was "BY FAITH" that Abraham was induced and enabled to offer up his only son. No other motive could have produced such an effect. And this faith which operated so powerfully in the mind of Abraham, is to be considered not merely as credit given to the authority by which the demand was made, but as reliance placed on the faithfulness of Him who made that demand. It was "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Abraham "believed that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure." But we must return again to this subject. I pass on therefore for the present with only requesting your attention to the mighty obstacles with which faith, in this instance, had to contend. It had to contend both with nature and grace, if I may so speak. For the act required was not only opposed to, and subject to reprobation by all the natural instincts of the human heart; but it seemed inconsistent with the previous actings of his own faith on the promise which had been made him, that "in Isaac should his seed be called." It had to combat with all the tender emotions of parental affection, which are, perhaps, the strongest and most durable feelings of which we are conscious. The intention of compliance with the act required must have been greatly

embittered by reflection on a mother's sufferings, when Sarah should be made acquainted with it. For Abraham must have inferred from his own feelings that those of Sarah would be exquisite, since a mother, unless she be worse than brutalized, cannot forget, so as to be destitute of compassion for the son of her womb. We may also suppose, without improbability that, among the crowd of afflicting reflections which must have rushed into the patriarch's mind, one, and that not the least, was the effect which his unnatural act would produce on the minds of the idolatrous Canaanites among whom he sojourned; the dishonour it would bring on his God, the reproach on his religion, the infamy it would entail on the character of one, who had appeared among them as the professor of a creed and worship purer than their own. Might he not have had reason to apprehend, as Jacob did in another case, Gen. xxxiv. 30, that they would rise up as one man to avenge so gross an insult on humanity and religion?

Can we suppose that, amidst this host of opponents to the patriarch's faith, the Devil was an idle and indifferent spectator of the arduous contest. In the case of Adam at the commencement of the patriarchal dispensation, and in that of Job at its close, we know that Satan was neither indifferent nor idle. And surely in a case of so great importance to Abraham, to his posterity,

and to the world at large, as that under our present consideration, he must have felt deeply interested, and have interfered with all his infernal subtilty and malice, on the mind both of the parental offerer and on that of the filial victim. This is so natural a supposition that the Jews have invented a conversation which they state to have passed between Abraham and the Devil on the way to Mount Moriah. We recollect the declaration of Isaac's great Antitype—"This is your hour, and the power of darkness."

But the shield of faith, with which the patriarch was armed, was proof against all assaults. He believed that it was his duty, in compliance with the command he had received, to sacrifice his son. That he intended to do so, is not to be doubted, since the Searcher of hearts, when the trial was over, said "thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me." Without this intention, the act of taking Isaac to Moriah, of binding him, and of placing him on the altar, would have been no proof of faith or obedience. But he believed also that God was able to raise his son again, even from the dead. He knew the faithfulness of God in the promises he had received, for he had already obtained the fullest evidence of their veracity, and therefore, as in a former instance, he staggered not through unbelief. (Comp. Rom. iv. 18—20.) He was assured of what God *could* do, and of what He had

promised to do, and he was satisfied with the expected result by whatever mode it might be effected. That he was fully assured of Isaac's return with him from the place of sacrifice, is plain from what he said to his servants when he left them behind him at the foot of the mountain: "Behold, I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you."

The interval of three days, between the command and its execution, occupied with the beloved object in the journey to Moriah, must have added greatly to the trial. Had the command required immediate execution on the spot, the compliance would have been less wonderful. But time was given for meditation on all the tremendous circumstances, for the operation of all the patriarch's feelings, and for all the efforts of the enemy to shake his resolution. How tedious must the journey, and the days it employed, have seemed! How strong that faith which wavered not in such an interval, when bent on such an exercise as that to which Abraham was called! No similar test of faith had been demanded in the past history of the world. It was new and extraordinary. No instance of a resurrection from the dead had as yet been witnessed. It was an untried path in which the patriarch had to walk.

But faith surmounted every difficulty. "Early in the morning" after receiving the Divine

mandate, the aged patriarch arose, took his Isaac with him, and departed for the place whether he was appointed to go. Mount Moriah was about 20 leagues distant from Beersheba, where Abraham then dwelt. By what indication the spot was pointed out to him, is not recorded; but the Targum of Jonathan says, that "Abraham saw the cloud of glory smoking on the mountain, and thereby knew the place." This tradition is not improbable, as the symbol of the Divine presence was usually exhibited at places appropriated to Divine worship, and Abraham was not unacquainted with its import. *

Abraham left his servants who accompanied him, probably, among other reasons, that he might have no interruption in the performance of his revolting duty from their interference. He and Isaac ascended the mountain alone, the latter carrying the wood intended to be employed in the consumption of his own remains. During this ascent the heart rending conversation was held, which is recorded to have taken place between Isaac and his venerable parent, in which the faith of Abraham again appears in all its glory. "My son, God will provide Himself a Lamb for a burnt-offering." When the object of the journey was made known to the son, his submission and "obedience unto death," are no

* See Letter XXIX.

less worthy of our admiration than the magnanimity of the father. On this latter subject the Jewish Rabbies relate many particulars, which, as they have no foundation in the inspired record, I pass by without transcribing them.

Isaac was at length bound and laid on the altar on the wood, and the determined patriarch lifted up his hand, armed with the sacrificing knife, to slay his son. At this tremendous crisis his arm was arrested by the voice of "the Angel of the Lord," or the Angel-Jehovah, calling him by name, and informing him that his fidelity was sufficiently tried, and that his Isaac should live. He who had given the command could alone revoke it; and we must therefore identify the Angel of the Lord with God who had required him to sacrifice his son. Indeed, this angel is afterwards introduced as saying, "By MYSELF have I sworn;" language which would be blasphemous as proceeding from the lips of the most exalted among created intelligences.

A ram providentially caught in an adjoining thicket by his horns, was substituted in the stead of the original victim; and thus the typical exhibition was completed, while the patriarch, "in a figure," according to his expectation, "received his son from the dead."

Without taking up your time by reciting the various interpretations which have been given of St. Paul's assertion, that Abraham received

his son from the dead *in a figure*, I shall state that which appears to me to accord best with the context, and with the meaning of the word parabole or parable* in a similar use of it. The interpretation then of the Apostle's words which I espouse is this, that the virtual resurrection of Isaac, in whose stead the ram was sacrificed, was a type of the real resurrection of Him, whom Isaac personated in the whole of this adumbrative scene. The escape of Isaac from the death intended was a parabolic resurrection. This is the view taken of the Apostle's words by the far greater number of commentators, ancient and modern, and by no means clashes with the opinion of others who understand the Apostle to make the ram the similitude or parabolic representative of Isaac, or who consider the parabolic resurrection of the latter to be an intended specimen of the general resurrection of the pious dead.

That the offering of Isaac was a typical exhibition of the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ, can hardly be called in question by any person who has attentively read the Scriptures. That it was so, was maintained by both the Greek

* A parable is "a comparison, similitude, or simile, in which one thing is compared with another." In this place, the restoration of Isaac, and the resurrection of Christ, are the things compared. In Heb. ix. 9, the word is used in a sense parallel to this, when the Mosaic tabernacle with its services is called a *parable*, i. e. a visible type, emblem, or figurative representation, of the good things of Christianity."

and Latin Fathers in general, and in that opinion there is also a general concurrence of more modern interpreters of Scripture. Indeed the declaration of St. Paul already cited is sufficient evidence on the subject: (Heb. xi. 19.) and in the previous declaration of Christ himself, that "Abraham rejoiced to see his day; that he saw it and was glad," "there is great reason to believe our Lord particularly refers to a special revelation made to Abraham, when he received the command from God to offer up Isaac; by which he was informed, that the sacrifice then enjoined him was a symbol of the method which God would really take for the redemption of sinful men, by the death and resurrection of his own Son."* In addition to this evidence from the New Testament, we may cite the 14th verse of the chapter in which the narrative is contained; where we are told that "Abraham called the name of that place" where he offered his Son, "JEHOVAH JIREH, as it is said to this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen." So our translators have rendered the passage. But, perhaps, it should have been rendered, "In the mount Jehovah will be seen, or will appear,"† viz.

* Bp. Warburton's Divine Legation. Vol. ii. *p.* 589—627. and the Vindication in the second volume of Occasional Remarks.

† The LXX renders the Hebrew by εν ορει Κυριος ωφθη· And lest it should be objected that this verb in a passive form has

when God becomes manifest in the flesh, and on this mountain shall be offered up as the antitype of this transaction.

The importance of such a visible representation of the mysterious facts which futurity was to develope, and on which the salvation of the world depended, before perhaps the art of writing was known, must be clear and incontrovertible. Exhibitions to the eye make a far more lasting impression on the memory, than words, however opposite and forcible, can make. Tradition was, in the days of Abraham, the main channel of information; and the tradition of such a scene as that which we have surveyed, was much more likely to be handed down uncorrupted to posterity then any merely verbal record of what the Christ was to be, to do, and to suffer, and the information itself to be more distinct both to cotemporaries and succeeding generations.*

I return from this digression on the importance of that typical view of the subject which I am about to take, and observe that the birth of Isaac

sometimes an active sense, it should be observed that in the form of the 1st Aorist passive, as above, it is used in a passive sense, *to be seen, to appear,* Matth. xvii. 3. Luke i. 11. Acts ii. 3. &c.

* It may be remarked that as tradition became more obscure supernatural interposition became more frequent; and that when miraculous evidence was to cease, the Spirit of prophecy, revealing the expected salvation, was granted in a more copious measure.

and the birth of Christ were both preternatural events. The heir of the blessing, in the family of Abraham, was born when his father was an hundred years old, and his mother ninety, and consequently past the usual time of childbearing, even in that period of longevity. Her conception is, throughout the Sacred History, represented as miraculous. And, as our Lord Jesus Christ was "conceived of the Holy Ghost," without the intervention of man, and "born of the *Virgin* Mary," the correspondence of the type with the antitype is too plain to be overlooked. To this circumstance another may be added,—that both were children of promise,—and the former evidently with relation to the latter; for the universal blessing which was to flow from Isaac, must necessarily be referred to HIM who was to spring from Isaac's loins in the fullness of time, in whom ALONE all the families of the earth are blessed. (Comp. chap. xvii. 19, and xxi. 12.) And when we read that Isaac was, as his name imports, a "son of laughter," i. e. a source of joy, to his parents and indeed to all mankind; our minds are instantly hurried forward, through intervening ages, to the declaration made by the angelic messenger to the shepherds at Bethlehem, "Behold, I bring you glad tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people; for unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." Luke ii. 10.

I omit to mention other circumstances in the history of Isaac, which plainly designate him as a typical person, in order that I may hasten to that important period of his life which has been the subject of this communication. Therein the first object that strikes the eye and arrests attention, is the surprising proof which Abraham was enabled, through Divine grace, to give of his love to God, by his prompt compliance with the astounding requisition which he received, "Take now thy son, thine only son, Isaac whom thou lovest, and offer him up for a burnt-offering on one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." But what shall we say of the corresponding act of Divine love which the Evangelist St. John has recorded, John iii. 16, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." It is said of Abraham that he "withheld not his son, his only son;" and of God, that He "spared not His own Son but delivered Him up for us all." If the act of Abraham's piety was "glorious," the act of Divine philanthropy "exceeds in glory," as much as the ocean exceeds the drop that falls from the bucket; or, as the radiance of the sun exceeds the feeble ray, which, emanating from the glow-worm, studs the bank. For the conduct of Abraham was that which duty required, and self-interest called for. Whatever he possessed was the gift of God; and when God

demanded his Isaac, He only demanded that which was His own. But in the instance of Divine loving kindness to which we have referred, we behold a gift bestowed on the unworthy, wholly unmerited, and in its value inestimable. Well may it be termed, THE "UNSPEAKABLE GIFT." Had Abraham hesitated, angelic bosoms would have heaved with surprise at his ingratitude; while emotions of astonishment swell them to the utmost in the contemplation of redeeming love.

The description which is given of Isaac in the direction which the patriarch received concerning him, seems intended to lead our minds from the type to the antitype. Was the devoted victim the venerable offerer's "son," his "only son" his "Isaac whom he loved?" Jesus was also the Son of God, his only Son, his beloved Son in whom He is well pleased. (Comp. John i. 14, 18. 1 John iv. 9. Matth. iii. 17, and xvii. 5. 2 Pet. i. 17.) "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief;" (Isa. liii. 10.) so that the words of the weeping prophet are appropriate to the lips of the illustrious Sufferer, "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold and see, if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger!" Lam. i. 12. If a sight of the father of the faithful, presented to the imagination in the

attitude in which he is exhibited in the record, when "he stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son," excite our astonishment; what should our feelings be, when we contemplate the Father of mercies, issuing the peremptory mandate which we read, Zach. xiii. 7, "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against THE MAN THAT IS MY FELLOW!"

The place which was the scene of this typical transaction, seems designed to excite our attention by the manner in which it was pointed out to Abraham. "Get thee into the land of MORIAH, and offer him THERE for a burnt offering upon ONE of the mountains *which I shall tell thee of.*" May we not properly ask, why the patriarch was enjoined to go to such a distance from the place of his abode for the performance of this extraordinary act? Why was one of the mountains preferable to another? And why was an immediate direction from heaven necessary to fix the proper spot for the sacrifice? No reply can be given to these questions, unless we derive it from the correspondence that exists between the offering of Isaac and that of his great antitype. Moriah was the name of a chain of mountains, on one of which the Temple was afterwards built; 2 Chron. iii. 1, and on another of which called Calvary our Lord was crucified. That this was the very spot pointed out to the patriarch, St. Jerom informs us from a tradition of the Jews.

And indeed it is extremely probable that, amidst the variety of concurring circumstances in the two cases, locality was one.

So soon as Abraham received the command to offer his son, he arose to execute it. His compliance was prompt and immediate. He conferred not with flesh and blood. The command was probably received in the visions of the night: for "he rose up early in the morning," and manifested his impatience to prove his ready obedience to the heart-rending injunction by performing himself those menial offices which are usually left to the care of servants, ver. 3. Can we read this without reflecting, that God had prepared HIS sacrifice from eternity, and "early in the morning" of time began to put his gracious purpose in execution. Hence Christ is said to have been "foreordained before the foundation of the world." 1 Pet. i. 20. Had Abraham time for reflection before he took the important step; and did he persevere in the resolution he had formed, notwithstanding the discouragements which a procrastination of three days presented to his mind? Behold the Father of mercies persevered in HIS purpose of love formed from eternity; and notwithstanding the discouragements which the experience of human unworthiness for 4000 years presented, yet at length He "spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all." Rom. viii. 32.

It is not the least remarkable among the typ[redacted] features which the history of Isaac furnishe[redacted] that he was offered on "the third day" from the time of his designation thereto by Divine appointment. For it was about the close of the third year, after our Lord's solemn consecration to his office by baptism, that he was made a sacrifice for the sins of the world. To this he seems Himself to refer in the message which he sent to Herod, recorded Luke xiii. 32, "Go ye and tell that fox, behold I cast out devils, and I do cures to day and to morrow, and *the third day I shall be perfected*;" i. e. "notwithstanding all thy rage and malice, till my appointed time be come, thou canst do nothing to shorten it."

Can we behold the son of Abraham carrying the wood on which he was to be laid as a victim appointed to death, up mount Moriah, without contemplating at the same time the Son of God, when "bearing his cross he went forth unto a place," probably the very identical spot, "called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha, where they crucified Him?" On this act of Abraham, in laying the wood on Isaac his son, an extraordinary comment has been produced from the *Beracot minor*, a rabbinical volume: "Isaac here carried the wood, as he that carries his cross on his shoulders:" A strange unintentional coincidence with the antitypical event!

It has been supposed that Isaac was, as I have already mentioned, about thirty-three years of age at the time when he was offered. If it were so, his age coincided with that of our Lord at the time of his crucifixion. It is, however, certain that the son of Abraham was of a sufficient age to have resisted his father's will, or to have escaped from his hands, had he been disposed to have exerted his strength. His submission therefore was voluntary, like that of our blessed Lord, who "was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before his shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth." Was Isaac bound? so was Christ. And as Isaac was bound by the hands of his father, so also was our Lord Jesus Christ; for if He had not been bound by the decree of his heavenly Father, the bonds of man would have proved as weak as the green withs with which the Philistines vainly tried to confine the Israelitish champion. But in both cases the surrender was voluntary. For as Isaac's piety towards God concurred with that of his father in obedience to the Divine will; so the love of our Lord Jesus Christ was in unison with that of His Father and our Father towards the lost race of mankind. "My life," said the adorable Jesus, a little before his crucifixion, "no man taketh from me, but I lay it down of myself: I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." John x. 18.

Is it possible to survey the submissive victim of mount Moriah "laid on the altar upon the wood," without adverting to an infinitely greater personage, a far more interesting spectacle, even our great atoning sacrifice, our sinless victim, laid also on the wood of the cross, and nailed thereto? Isaac was spared, but Jesus suffered. A ram was substituted in the place of Isaac; but no substitute could be found for "the Lamb of God." It was necessary for human salvation that He should "suffer, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God."

The substitution of the ram in the place of Isaac was necessary to the completion of the typical exhibition, unless Isaac had been actually put to death and miraculously raised again from it. But this latter mode would have afforded too close a representation of the thing signified. In all the types scope was left for the exercise of faith by some obscurity in the parabolic prefiguration. Had Isaac been really sacrificed and raised from the dead, the type would have differed in this instance from all the other shadows of the typical dispensations.

Two things were to be made known to the father of the faithful who was constituted the depositary of truth, and through whose seed the faith delivered to the patriarchs was to be handed down through successive generations till the appearance of its great object. He was to have set before

his eyes a figure of the death and resurrection of the promised Seed of the woman, the Benefactor of all nations. But how was this to be effected? It could only be effected by a double image, as in the cases, under the Levitical institution, of the two goats on the great day of atonement, and of the two birds in the rite of cleansing the leper, one of whom, in each instance, was slain and the other suffered to live. Yet, in both cases, sufficient evidence was given, in the former by the transfer of guilt to the scape goat, and in the latter by dipping the wings of the surviving bird in the blood of the one that had been slain, that the twofold exhibition in either instance was to be identified in different relations, with respect to the typical object it proposed. When the historian says that "Abraham took the ram and offered him up in the stead of his son," I understand him to mean, that Abraham did so, by Divine direction, in order to fulfil the representation which had been left incomplete by the gracious rescue of Isaac from the sacrificing knife.

Divine agency is to be marked both in the type and antitype. It was not chance that brought the ram to the spot where it was wanted, or that entangled its horns in the thicket where it was caught. It was God who provided the ram for the typical offering, and who in the fulness of time provided the great antitypical holocaust, on

the credit of which the patriarchs were pardoned and saved, and by faith in which we also attain the blessings of pardon and salvation.

It has been thought by some writers on the subject, that Abraham supposed, at the commencement of this transaction, that Isaac was himself the great Benefactor who was to appear, as Eve had before supposed that her first born Cain was "the" expected "man-Jehovah." Certainty in the birth of Isaac, and in the command which Abraham received for offering him up as a sacrifice there was what was sufficiently extraordinary to excite suspicion in the patriarch's mind, unless he had very closely and attentively weighed the terms of the original promise. Bishop Horsley seems to have favoured this opinion, if we may judge from an extract he has produced from the works of Hutchinson, without censuring its contents. The extract, in his Biblical Criticism on this chapter is as follows: "The types and promises showed that one of the line of Abraham was, (by the obligation of the antemundane oath) to be sacrificed, and to be a blessing to all the race of Adam. The person in Abraham's time was not described; he was ordered to sacrifice his son; he complied with the precept, not doubting but, as he was directed to sacrifice him, that he was the person who was to redeem man ..... Thus he was a shadow of the essence, the Supreme Father who

gave; his Son, of the Son of that Father who really redeemed his brethren; and though he was not offered, the will of each performed his part, and, in that sense, Isaac was offered, and Abraham offered."*

I must not, my dear friend, bid adieu to the interesting subject which we have surveyed, till we have, cursorily at least, noticed the lovely model which the conduct of Abraham presents for our imitation.

This celebrated† act of Abraham was a wonderful display of faith in Divine promises. It was "by faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac—accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the dead, from whence also he received him in a figure."

And as all Divine faith in the human soul has an atoning Saviour for its object, it is not to be doubted that, through this typical representation, Abraham as a guilty sinner, looked to the promised Redeemer. He therein "saw Christ's day and was glad," as well indeed he might be. (See Rom. iv. throughout.) This profession of faith resembled that which was afterwards enjoined to the Israelites, (Lev. i. 4) who, when they brought their burnt-offering to the door of

* *Hutchinson, vol.* vii. *p.* 325. Quoted in *Biblical Criticism vol.* i. *p.* 71.

† Celebrated by Jews, Heathens, Mahomedans, and the church of God.

the tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord, were required to "lay their hands on the head of the burnt-offering;" by that significative action transferring their guilt to the typical atoner, and professing their faith in the true expiatory offering. Whosoever will be pardoned and justified, must obtain the blessing in the same way; for there is no other.

Was Abraham's faith productive of obedience? The faith of God's elect is still the same operative principle. "Wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the Scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness, and he was called the friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." James ii. 20—24. We are not however to infer from this reasoning of the Apostle, that Abraham's person was justified by works before God; for this would be to contradict the express declaration of St. Paul, Rom. iv. 1—5. But the meaning of St. James is plainly this, that the reality and Divine origin of Abraham's faith was justified before men by the excellent fruits which it produced. "Faith," in all instances of its existence, "worketh by love; and in propor-

tion to the strength of our faith in Christ, will be the extent and promptitude of our obedience to the Divine Will.

Was Abraham far advanced in years, when this severest of all his trials occurred? Then, no Christian must conclude that his warfare is terminated while life remains. No age, station, or spiritual advancement in the school of Christ, exempts from suffering. Abraham had experienced many previous afflictions; but this which came upon him when he was near the goal, and might suppose his probation closed, was heavier than all that preceded it. God accommodates his dispensations to the strength with which he has endued his servants. He tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, while the full grown saint is permitted to feel the power of the rude and penetrating blast. 'Tis "the trial of our faith which, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, shall be found to praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. i. 7.) Therefore the Apostle adds, (chapter iv. 12, 13,) "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice inasmuch as ye are made partakers of Christ's sufferings; that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy."

In the production of this wonderful instance

of obedience, faith and love were co-operative in the patriarch's bosom. He believed that God was able to raise his son even from the dead; and that, notwithstanding the apparent severity and inconsistency of the requisition, God was still his covenant-God, and would accomplish His own promises to him and his seed. (Comp. ver. 5.) And he remembered that his Isaac, and all that he had, whether in possession or reversion, was the result of gratuitous favour shown to him. We may suppose the patriarch to have reasoned with himself somewhat after this manner:— "Hath not the Lord a right to do what He will with His own? May He not, with the utmost equity, resume the loan which I have received from Him? Can He not make up the loss of what He requires me to surrender? Is not my own life, and that of my son, justly forfeited by sin? Shall I hesitate a moment in affording this proof of my confidence in His faithfulness, and love to His name, who hath conferred so great benefits upon me, and whom I have ever found merciful and just in all His dealings with me?" After a similar manner faith operates in the bosom of every converted sinner. May my dear friend and myself daily feel its blessed effects in our souls!

By the result of this trial of the faith of Abraham, we are taught that man's extremity of distress is God's opportunity of manifesting His

power and goodness. Isaac is spared, and a ram, providentially furnished as a substitute, is offered in his stead. The mount of difficulty is the place in which the brightest exhibitions of Omnipotent Grace are afforded to believers. The ascent thereto may be steep; but the experience thereon afforded, will be proportionably sweet, and amply repay their labour. Let believers denominate such places JEHOVAH JIREH. (See ver. 10, 11. and comp. ver. 14.)

What holy joy must have filled the patriarch's bosom, when, at the conclusion of this awful scene, a voice from on high declared, "Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me!" "By Myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, that in blessing I will bless thee; &c.—and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed my voice." The joy of the Father of the faithful arose not merely from the personal interests which he had in the promise thus confirmed to him, a promise which had before been often made; but it must have been heightened beyond all conception by the consideration that the promise comprehended all the "nations of the earth." In that joy we are permitted to participate. "For when God made promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no greater,

He sware by Himself, saying, Surely, blessing, I will bless thee, and, multiplying, I will multiply thee: And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise," viz. by the birth of Isaac. "For men verily swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife: wherein God willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." Heb. vi. 12—18.

May this consolation, my dear friend, be ours! So prays

Your's truly,

LETTER XXXII.

DIVINE MANIFESTATIONS TO THE PATRIARCH JACOB.

MY DEAR FRIEND.

In a review such as my correspondence with you professes to take, the history of the patriarch Jacob ought not to be omitted, since that history furnishes an account of several Divine manifestations which he received, on two of which ulterior Scriptures furnish the necessary comment. At Bethel, Mahanaim, and at Peniel, the highly favoured pilgrim, while by faith he sojourned in the land of promise, dwelling in tabernacles or tents, as his fathers Abraham and Isaac had before dwelt, the heir with them of the same promise, was indulged with discoveries of the Divine presence and protection. These discoveries concur with those which we have already noticed, in proving that Christianity is as old as the fall, and that the record,—"that God hath given unto us eternal life, and that this life is in His son"—has been the only foundation of hope to guilty man in every age of the world.

When Jacob had obtained the patriarchal blessing from the lips of his father, the blessing which comprehended the hope of the life that now is and that of the world to come; his personal safety became endangered by the resentment of his brother Esau. His mother therefore, (under a pretext that was real and solid, though she was influenced by a more powerful motive, an apprehension for the life of her favourite son which she seems to have concealed from Isaac) induced the patriarch to send him to Padan Aram to seek a suitable wife in her own family, who continued in the true faith from which the Canaanites, among whom Isaac sojourned, had apostatized. Isaac immediately concurred in a proposal which piety dictated, and Jacob was dismissed with additional benedictions from his father, but without any other attendants, to undertake a long journey. It is probable that the necessity of concealing his departure from Esau, or a fear of exciting in his mind any envious feeling, prevented Jacob's taking any companion with him.

But the Christian adage, that "a believer is never less alone than when alone," was exemplified in the experience of Jacob. At the end of the first day after leaving his father's residence, he lay down to sleep on a spot, which afterwards became famous in sacred story from what occurred during that highly favoured night. He

needed consolation, and the God of his fathers vouchsafed it abundantly to him.

The account of this Divine Revelation is as follows. Gen. xxviii. 10, &c. "And Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went towards Haran. And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set: and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set upon the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angles of God ascending and descending on it. And behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD GOD of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest to thee will I give it, and to thy seed. And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth: and thou shalt spread abroad to the west and the east, and to the north and to the south: and in thee, and in thy seed, shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, till I have done that which I have spoken to thee.—And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is in this place, and I knew it not.—And he was afraid, and said—How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.—

And Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil on the top of it. And he called the name of that place Bethel: but the name of that city was called Luz at the first. And Jacob vowed a vow, saying—If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then shall the LORD be my God. And this stone which I have set for a pillar shall be God's house; and of all that thou shalt give me, I will give the tenth unto thee."

Such is the remarkable history of the first immediate revelation of Himself with which God favoured his servant Jacob. I shall trouble you with a few remarks on the circumstances which preceded his Divine dream, on his dream itself, and on his feelings and conduct after it.

The place where Jacob rested had before been noticed by Moses, more than once, as the place where Abraham had built an altar unto the LORD. Whether Jacob was acquainted with the circum stances of his grandfather's visits to this spot, and, under feelings of reverence and faith, employed the stones of which Abraham's altar had been constructed, for his pillow or bolster, and was thereby in some measure prepared by sweet and solemn meditation for what followed, may be made a question. Certainly, the circum-

stances of privation, solitude and peril, together with the uncertainty of his future prospects, in which he was placed, called for the exercise of faith and prayer, and would naturally lead the thoughts of a pious mind to the covenant of personal and universal mercy, revealed to his fathers by Him who had vouchsafed to assume the name of "the ALEIM of Abraham and of Isaac." It seems not improbable that Isaac or Rebecca, in giving him directions for his journey, as they naturally would do, had mentioned Abraham's visit to Bethel, as so called by the historian in anticipation of the name which the spot was to receive from Jacob, and had pointed it out to the notice of the traveller on his way to Padan Aram: but as there is no authority in the record for this supposition, it is mentioned only as a conjecture.

Mr. Parkhurst contends that the stone spoken of, was not used by Jacob for a pillow or bolster; but that it was placed *at*, or *near to*, his pillow. He thinks that the patriarch, before his dream, considered this stone as having a sacred character in consequence of Abraham's previous visit to this place, and therefore placed it near his head when he lay down to sleep. But I can discern no sufficient evidence for this supposition.* It is

* Heb. Lexicon on the word מְרַאֲשׁ. It is admitted that in the texts which Mr. P. quotes in confirmation of his remark (viz.

certain that it afterwards had such a character assigned to it, as we shall presently be led to observe.

The dream with which Jacob was favoured was unquestionably enigmatical. This might safely have been assumed, had ulterior Scriptures afforded no comment on it. It was intended for the consolation of the wanderer, and adapted to his present distressing situation. But it had, as we shall find, a scope and aim beyond the temporal consolation of the patriarch. It was intended to afford spiritual and eternal comfort to all those, who, like him, are "pilgrims and strangers upon earth." We shall therefore inquire into its immediate and more remote object, after having offered a conjecture on the image which was presented to the patriarch's imagination.

The word which is rendered *a ladder** occurs only in this place. It is not found as a verb in

1 Sam. xxvi. 7, 11, 16. xix. 13, 16. 1 Kings xix. 6.) the preposition "ב must be understood as usual before a noun," and that the preposition in these texts must mean *at* or *near to*. But in this history of Jacob, I see no reason for supplying any preposition, as the word *pillow* or *bolster* may be considered as being in apposition with the stone which Jacob used. "He put or placed one of the stones, his (or, *as his*) pillow. Or, why may not מ, prefixed to the word ראשותיו, be itself a preposition, and be rendered *for* according to Mr. Parkhurst's own interpretation of that prefix. See Lex. in מ.

* מרכס.—LXX. Κλιμαξ—*Vulg. Scala.*

the Hebrew Scriptures, and we have therefore no means of ascertaining its ideal sense. It must however mean something that connected heaven and earth, a line of communication between them. To conceive that a representation was made to the patriarch's imagination of the instrument of human fabrication which is now commonly called a ladder, is, perhaps, unnecessary, and may weaken the magnificence and import of the image.

I have formed in my own mind, while engaged in meditation on this delightful subject, the idea of a physical phenomenon, of no unusual occurrence, as calculated to answer the Divine purpose. We often observe a chasm in a bright cloud, through which the sunbeams descending to the earth, and exhaling vapour from it, form a stupendous obelisk. The phenomenon is formed, and becomes visible to the eye, by an effluence and refluence connecting heaven and earth. The light issuing from the solar orb and descending to the earth, and vapour ascending from the earth heavenwards, constitute the communication to which I refer. Such a representation seems to me to correspond with the intention of the enigmatic vision, and to be more dignified in its character than that of a common ladder: and it may be observed that the analogies of Scripture are generally derived from physical causes and effects.

But I merely suggest this explanation of the mean of intercourse referred to, without laying any stress upon it.* It is of more importance to inquire into its intent. It had, as I have before observed, an immediate and a remote object: it was intended to correspond with both the branches of the promise which accompanied and explained it, the temporal and spiritual blessings which that promise conveyed. "The land whereon thou liest to thee will I give it and to thy seed:" and "In thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." The promise explains the patriarchal blessing which he had received; and the enigma of his dream illustrates both its clauses.

In a general sense, this medium of communication between earth and heaven, above which the Divine Majesty, or Glory, of which the sun is the known emblem in nature, appeared, was designed to confirm the faith of Jacob in the doctrine of a particular Providence, and to assure him that he was himself a special object of providential care. The meaning of the vision cannot be better explained than in the words of the accompanying promise from the lips of

* Hæc quidem, (says *Fabricius*, speaking on another subject) tunc temporis sive cogitavi sive lusi. Neque enim inter eos nomen meum profiteor, quibus meritò typomania vel allegoromania imputari queat. Multæ in hoc genere cogitationes piæ sunt, neque cum analogiâ fidei pugnantes, verum tamen non omnes æque solidæ. *Fabric. Christolog.* Vol. ii. p. 90.

JEHOVAH, the ALEIM of Abraham and Isaac, who thereby admitted Jacob into the same relationship to Himself, to which his fathers had been before admitted.

All this is too evident to need any proof or illustration. But that the symbol had a further meaning may be inferred from its own character, from the spiritual clause in the promise, and from a reference to this Divine manifestation made by our Lord in his interview with Nathaniel. The vision involved the great mystery of Godliness,—"God (to be) manifested in the flesh." The visionary object took its rise in heaven where the Glory of the Lord was exhibited to the patriarch's view, and it rested on the earth whereon the patriarch lay. It connected the former with the latter.—It was the channel of intercourse between them.

That the mediation of Christ, God-man, was intended by the representation, appears from our Lord's allusion to it, when he said to Nathaniel, John i. 51, "Hereafter ye shall see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man." That our Lord refers to Jacob's vision is, I believe, agreed by the best commentators, though they disagree in explaining the fulfilment of his words, or to what period they relate. It has been maintained that the crucifixion, the resurrection, and the ascension, are the periods referred to; but the patrons of

this view of the subject have not shown that the angels of God did then visibly ascend and descend on the Son of Man. Others have referred the prediction to the millennial state, and to the intercourse between heaven and earth which is then to take place. Bp. Patrick * conceives that our Lord refers to the miraculous powers which he exercised during his personal ministry upon earth, and which afforded continual evidence of his Divinity. For it does not appear that the Apostles witnessed any angelic ministry on the person of their Divine Master till the time of his passion, his resurrection and ascension; and what they then witnessed can hardly be supposed to answer to the words in which the promise is conveyed, that they should see "heaven opened,

* The Bishop's words are, "Christ here seems to allude to *Jacob's ladder*, of which we read Gen. xxviii. 12, 13, on the top of which we read was the Divine Majesty, and the angels ascending, saith *Maimonides, to receive his commands*, and descending *to execute them*: Christ therefore by these words seems to inform them, that the miracles which they should see performed by him, should declare the Divine Majesty present with him, and giving him those commands he was to execute by his prophetic office, as clearly as if they had seen the angels of God ascending and descending on him. They who refer this to the day of judgment, did not consider this was to happen απαρτι *within a little while*; and they who refer it to Christ's passion, and resurrection, must show how the angels ascended and descended on Christ in the sight of the Apostles."

But must not απαρτι, as used by our Lord in Matth. xxvi. 64, mean time future indefinitely considered, or, as it is rendered in our version, *hereafter?*

and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of man."

But if we may consider the symbol as a column of solar effluence, rendered visible by earthly vapour, and the mediatorial character and office of the God-man as the thing signified thereby; and if the ascent and descent on the Son of Man were designed to intimate, not that he is the object of communication between heaven and earth, but that he is its medium and channel as being the "one mediator between God and man;" then is the symbol of easy application. He hath "opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers;" "Through Him we have access by one Spirit unto the Father." He, like the supposed pyramid in the vision, whose point is in the cloud of glory, and whose base rests on the earth, composed of light from the former, and attracting vapour from the latter, unites earth and heaven in his compound person; and by his Divine influence, that of his own Spirit, attracts heavenwards the souls of his redeemed. Then, whether we consider the angels spoken of by Moses, as the material agency of nature, according to the not infrequent meaning of the term,* symbolizing

* Nomen officii, non naturæ. *St. August.* Comp. Ps. civ. 4. עשה מלאכיו רוחות משרתיו אש להט. The Psalmist cannot be understood to say that Jehovah maketh his *angels* (viz. unembodied intelligent beings) *spirits*; for they are such by nature, and the assertion would be an unmeaning repetition. The

the grace of God and its effects; or unembodied "ministering spirits sent forth to minister to them that are heirs of salvation," our Lord's words will be illustrated by the image. For in the former sense, the "Son of Man" is the channel of all grace; and in the latter, it is the purpose of God to "gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in Him," * and "to reconcile all things to Himself by Christ whether they be things in earth or things in heaven. †

This, then, appears to me to be the import of the symbol in Jacob's dream. He, "the Son of Man," who was revealed from the beginning as "the Seed of the woman," and was known as the "Man-Jehovah;"—He, in whom all the families of the earth were to be blessed, Immanuel, God to be manifested in the flesh; He, the brightness of the glory of God and the express image of his person;—He, in his compound person and mediatorial character, was exhibited to Jacob under the symbol of a stream of light from the sun, rendered visible by vapours

whole Psalm is a description of physical phenomena; and the meaning of ver. 4 must be, if like the context it have a physical meaning, that God constitutes רוחות *the winds*, or particles of air, his agents, in performing the wonders of the natural world, and *flame of fire*, or ignited vapour, *his ministers*. These agencies concur in all the operations of nature, and the Psalmist claims them as the servants of God.

* Eph. i. 10. † Coloss. i. 20.

ascending from the earth. In his person "the light of life" became recommunicable to man; and through Him is "the kingdom of heaven opened to all believers." "THE WORD," whose symbol is light, "was made flesh," saith St. John in the same chapter in which he records the conversation with Nathaniel, "and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth." He is "the light which shineth in darkness,"—"the true light which lighteth," or enlighteneth, "every man that cometh into the world;" insomuch that there is no spiritual light to be enjoyed but by Him. He discovers heaven to us, and is the only channel of communication with it. By Him the light of life descends to earth; and by Him, spiritual affections, raised by that light, ascend to heaven.

This view of the symbol and its design will, if I mistake not, derive confirmation from the grateful and adoring conduct of the patriarch after waking from his sleep. What *he said* on the occasion, we shall presently consider, when we have first noticed what *he did*. "Jacob rose up early in the morning and took the stone which he had put for his pillows, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil on the top of it." Without all doubt this act had relation to his vision, and that not merely as commemorative, in a general view, of the revelation he had received; but as

indicative that he understood and exercised faith in that revelation. The pillar was representative as well as commemorative.

But what was the pillar of stone which Jacob set up, and on which he poured oil, intended to represent? May we not safely conclude that it had a relation to the pyramid of light which had been exhibited to him in his dream? And if this were its primary intention, the mediation of the God-man was its ulterior object. Jacob's pillar, or obelisk,* was, like "the Cherubim of glory" in the temple, a secondary type. The primary type, in both cases, was a physical phenomenon; the secondary, in both, was an artificial representation.

Sacred, memorial, or representative pillars were used both by believers and idolaters, the latter having borrowed them from the former.†

* Sol κτιστης της οικουμενης, *conditor universi,* nominatur in *obelisco* maximo, quem Constantinus magnus transferri Romam jussit. *Voss. de Idololatriâ.* Lib. ii. cap. 5. Such I apprehend was the shape of the pillar of fire and cloud which was the usual symbol of the Divine presence and which appeared at the top of Jacob's ladder. See also *Parkhurst* on the root עמד

† The Bætylia of the Heathen derived their name from Bethel, as the practice of erecting them was derived from the act of Jacob there. "As Jacob erected this *pillar of stone* for a *memorial* of God's *apparition* to him; so, in like manner, the superstitious *Pagans,* both *Phœnicians* and *Grecians,* upon some imaginary επιφανεια, or apparition of some God, (or the Devil rather) would erect their Bætylia, or *pillars,* in commemoration of such apparition." *Gale's Court of the Gentiles.* B. 2. chap.

This pillar, or another, at Bethel is mentioned in two other parts of the history of Jacob.—The patriarch refers to it in his conversation with Laban, after his departure from Padan Aram, on his return to Canaan. He tells Laban that "the ANGEL of the ALEIM," identifying the Angel of the Covenant with JEHOVAH the ALEIM of Abraham and Isaac, "spake unto him in a dream, and said, I am the God of Bethel where thou *anointedst the pillar*, and where thou vowedst a vow unto me." Chapter xxxi. 13. This recognition of the representative act marks the Divine approbation of it. And, again, on reaching Bethel, after a lapse of thirty years from the time of the former act of faith, it is recorded, chapter xxxv. 9, &c, that "God appeared unto Jacob again," (doubtless as before in the character of the Angel, Ambassador, or Personator of the Aleim, and probably in a human form) "and blessed him:" He then proceeded to confirm the change of Jacob's name before made at Peniel,

7. Sect. 8. These *Bætylia* were supposed by the Pagans to be inhabited by the Deities to whom they were consecrated, and therefore were called living stones λιθους εμψυχους.—See also Bp. Stillingfleet's Origines Sacræ B. 3. c. 5. Sect. 10: That the practice of anointing these stones with oil, and of thereby consecrating them to the purposes of worship obtained among the heathen, is shown by Spencer (*De Legibus Hebr. Dissert.* iii. *Lib.* iii. *Sect.* ii. *cap.* vi.) who quotes Clemens Alexandrinus, Apuleius, and Lucian, in support of his position, and traces the practice to Jacob and his fathers.

and renewed the promises of the covenant before established in his favour. And then it is added, that, after God had "gone up from him," he "set up a pillar in the place where God talked with him, even a pillar of stone; and he poured a drink offering thereon, and he poured oil thereon."

The idolatrous abuse of the practice of erecting representative pillars rendered injunctions and prohibitions necessary in relation to it. Thus, among the restrictions laid on the Israelites, we find one on this subject Deut. xvi. 22.* "Ye shall make you no idols nor graven images, neither rear you up a standing image (marg. a pillar) neither shall ye set up any image of stone in your land, *to bow down to it*; for I am the Lord your God." I cannot, however, suppose that this prohibition was absolute, since we find that Samuel set up a stone as a memorial of the Lord's deliverance of Israel from the Philistines, and called the name of it *Ebenezer*. 1 Sam. vii. 12. The prohibition is perhaps to be confined to the sin of performing any act of mediate worship to such representative pillars.†

* See also Exod. xxiii. 24. Levit. xxvi. 1. Deut. xii. 3. 2 Kings x. 26, 27.

† "The *statue* had been in use among the true worshippers in early ages; but was so much abused before the giving of the law, that it was *absolutely* (Quere) prohibited by Moses. A *statue*, מצבה, signifies any thing, more especially of stone, erected or set up as a monument or memorial; but particularly as a religious monument. That consecrated pillars of stone

Though the shape of the sacred pillars noticed in Scripture is no where described, we find that of pillars erected by ancient Idolators frequently mentioned, and may perhaps safely infer from them that Jacob's pillar had something of a conical form, corresponding with the visionary representation he had seen in his dream.* Might

were in use among the patriarchs, we learn from the history of Jacob. *Horsley's Bibl: Criticism. vol.* iv. *p.* 34, 5.

Non me præterit Deum legem (Deut. xvi. 22.) *de non erigendâ* מצבה *statuâ* populo suo tradidisse. Eam autem Rabbini nonnulli latam tantùm pro tempore sentiunt, ut Israelitas cohiberet, aliàs ad Ethnicorum Idololatriam effusè ruituros. Sed Maimonides et contribules ejus secula omnia lege illâ teneri, eam verò de statuis solummodo Deo alicui fictitio dicatis interpretandam, arbitrantur. Hoc e Dionys. (in Maimonide de Idololat. cap. 6. Sect. 8.) Vossii fide refero, cujus hæc sententia est, *non statuas quasve, sed superstitionas duntaxat, esse interdictas: non illas itidem quæ in rei alicujus testimonium ponerentur,* qualis illa Jacobi (*Gen.* xxviii. 22. and xxxi. 52.) et fortasse Sichemensium. (Jud. ix. 6.) Ideoque verba hæc *Non eriges tibi statuam, exponunt Hebræi de statuâ ad superstitionem constituendâ, non illâ quæ ad memoriam* beneficii *ponitur. Spencer de Legibus Hebræor. Lib.* iii. *Dissert.* vii. *Sect.* 3. See also *Witsii Ægyptiaca.* Lib. ii. cap. xii. Sect. 5, 6, 7.

* See the *Encycloped. Britannica.* Art. *Juggernaut*—and *Major Symes's Embassy to the Kingdom of Ava.*

The idol *Algabalus,* or *Heliogabalus,* intended as an image of the sun, as its name implies, was a great stone, which gradually lessened to a point, or was of a *conical* shape, and was considered as having fallen down from heaven. *Herodianus,* quoted by *Witsius,* in his *Ægyptiaca,* Lib. ii. Caput xii. Sect. xii. *Sanchoniathon* asserts that the *Bæthylia,* or imitations of Jacob's stone at *Bethel,* were formed by the God *Uranus,* that is *the heaven* or *heavens.* This seems to imply a connexion between the design of these pillars and some phenomenon of the heavens.

not the re-erection of his pillar, or the substitution of another, mentioned on his return to Bethel, be intended for the purpose of rendering it a more perfect model of the conical symbol which had been exhibited to his imagination? However this may be considered, it is certain that Jacob consecrated his pillar to a sacred use. His pouring oil and a drink offering upon it is sufficient evidence of such a consecration; and the reference so frequently made to it, seems to imply its typical relation to some important object of faith. The place where it was erected was set apart as "the house" or temple "of God." It does not, however, follow that any covered building was erected there, either at the patriarch's first or second visit; but merely that the spot whereon the pillar stood, was thenceforward considered by Jacob and his family as a place of Divine worship;* and it is more than probable, from the mention of the "Drink offering," that

Dr. *Shaw*, Travels, *p.* 424. speaking of the Prænestine pavement, of which he has given a print, says, "At *Heliopolis* (i. e. *Bethshemesh*, or *the house* or *city of the Sun*, Jer. xliii. 13.) we are very agreeably entertained with the *obelisks* that were erected before it." One of which, fifty-eight feet high, remains to this day. See *Niebuhr*, Voyage en Arabic, tom. i. *p.* 8. Many authors have observed that, as *obelisks* were dedicated to the Sun, so their *tapering* and *pointed* form was intended to represent his rays. See Shaw's Travels, *p.* 365. *Parkhurst* in יצב.

* The temples of the East were, and indeed many of them still are, mere inclosures without a roof.

on his second visit he offered sacrifice, not immediately, or mediately to his pillar, but to Jehovah, as Abraham had done before, thereby testifying, by a further act of devotion, his faith in the promised seed of the woman, the true "Lamb of God" who was to take away the sin of the world.

Very natural is Jacob's adoring language when he awoke from his dream: "How dreadful" (or, rather, perhaps, how awful, rendered so by the presence of Jehovah) "is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven." He had there enjoyed the Divine Presence—He had there seen heaven opened, and had been instructed in the way that leads to it.

I pass by the manifestation which it pleased God to make to Jacob of his presence and favour, recorded Gen. xxxii. 1, 2, only requesting you to consider whether it be not alluded to in the 34th Psalm, where we read that "the Angel of Jehovah encampeth" (the word is the same as in the history) "round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them;" and to compare both with Ps. cxxx. 2, where it is said that "Jehovah" (Himself) "is round about his people, from this time forth for evermore."

Another Divine interview with which the patriarch Jacob was favoured, occurred the very night before the dreaded meeting with his brother

Esau. The record of the fact is as follows:— Jacob having sent his family over a brook which lay between him and his brother, remained alone, probably choosing retirement in his present perilous circumstances in order that he might spend the night in prayer without interruption. While thus engaged, "there wrestled a man * with him until the breaking of the day. And when HE saw that He prevailed not against him, He touched the hollow of his thigh: and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with Him. And He said, Let me go, for the day breaketh: and he (Jacob) said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. And He said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob: And He said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed. And Jacob asked Him and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And He said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? And He blessed him there. And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel (that is, the face of God); for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." Gen. xxxii. 24, &c.

This is one of the most extraordinary narratives that occur in the patriarchal history. The Divine condescension, and the evidence of the future

* אִישׁ *a person, one:* the word does not determine whether it was a man or not.

incarnation of the wrestling Angel, which it displays, render it worthy of the closest attention. But before we proceed to make any remarks on it, let us compare a prophetic comment with the text. The prophet Hosea recites the fact thus: Chap. xii. 4. "He" (Jacob) "took his brother by the heel in the womb," from whence he derived the name of Jacob; "and by his strength he had power with God: yea, he had power over the Angel and prevailed: he wept and made supplication unto him. He found him at Bethel, and there He spake with us, even Jehovah God of hosts. Jehovah is His memorial."

The first question which occurs on the subject of this extraordinary narrative, is, whether the scene which it describes was real or visionary; or whether Jacob actually wrestled with the Angel who is spoken of, or only seemed to himself to do so. The reality of the contest is, I think, evinced beyond all doubt by the effect ascribed to the Angel's touch on the patriarch's thigh, and his consequent lameness. That the Israelites so understood it, appears from their abstinence, in taking their food, from that part of every animal which they supposed to correspond with the joint affected in their forefather's body. Indeed, the whole history bears internal evidence, that the description is that of a corporeal struggle, as the outward sign of a corresponding spiritual exercise of faith.

It may further be inquired, who was the Angel that wrestled with Jacob?—Was he a created spirit in an assumed corporeal shape, or—Was he the Angel of the Covenant, who had before appeared to him at Bethel, and who, in that transaction, is identified with the God of Abraham and Isaac? Bishop Patrick, in his commentary, maintains the former opinion. He says, "As Jacob was praying, or when he had done, a man encountered him, with whom he grappled; taking him, perhaps, for one of Esau's attendants come to surprise him; for it was so dark that he could not see what kind of countenance he had: or, if he could, angels were wont to appear so like men, that at the first they did not discern the difference. *Maimonides* fancies all this was done in a prophetic vision;* but the whole narration confutes this. The only question is, whether this was a created angel, or the eternal ΛΟΓΟΣ, as many of the ancient fathers understood it, whose opinion is opposed by *St. Austin*, and seems to me not so probable, as that this angel was one of God's host, mentioned ver. 2. sent from the SHECHINAH, or *Divine Majesty:* by whose order, and in whose presence, he strove with *Jacob,* in such manner as is here described. In short, I take him to be one of those whom the *Jews* call *angels of the presence;* that wait

* *More Nevoch.* Part II. cap. 42.

continually on the *Divine Majesty*, and make a part of his retinue."* This opinion the Bishop afterwards sanctions by a quotation from St. Jerome, who maintains that the change of Jacob's name was only promised by the angel at Peniel, but was afterwards authoritatively confirmed by the SHECHINAH at Bethel.

This view of the character of the Angel appears to me in direct opposition to the terms of the record. The Angel speaks as one having authority, and there is no intimation given that his authority was delegated. Jacob's prevailing with the Angel is explained by the Angel himself as prevailing with God; and the reason assigned by Jacob for the name he gave the place where he maintained this successful conflict, when he called it *Peniel*, or the face of God, was, that he had "seen God face to face." In like manner the Prophet Hosea expressly states, that Jacob's power over the Angel, against whom he prevailed, was "power with God;" and that his corporeal conflict was accompanied with "weeping and

* It does not seem to me improbable that Jacob *at first* supposed his antagonist to be a man like himself. But in the second part of this quotation how much is taken for granted! Who are *the angels of the presence*, so called by some Jewish Rabbis? Does the Scripture ascribe this character to any other persons besides the Word and the Spirit of God? Two of these *angels of the presence*, so called by the Jews, are Michael and Gabriel; on whose character see *Bp. Heber's Bampton Lectures, Lect.* iv. and *note*, quoted in a subsequent page.

supplication unto JEHOVAH, God of hosts;" and, lest any doubt should remain, he, as it were on purpose to meet that doubt, adds, "JEHOVAH is his memorial."*

* "The person of whom it is said, that the name JEHOVAH is his memorial, is no other then He whom the patriarch found at Bethel, who there spake with the Israelites in the loins of their progenitor. He, whom the patriarch found at Bethel, who there, in that manner, spake with the Israelites, was, by the tenor of the context, the antagonist with whom Jacob was afterwards matched at Peniel. The antagonist with whom he was matched at Peniel, wrestled with the patriarch, as we read in the book of Genesis, in the human form. The conflict was no sooner ended, than the patriarch acknowledged his antagonist as God. Gen. xxxii. 30. The holy Prophet, Hosea xii. 4, first calls him angel (מלאך), and after mention of the colluctation, and of the meeting and conference at Bethel, says, chap. xii. 5, that he whom he had called angel, was "Jehovah God of hosts." And to make the assertion of this person's Godhead, if possible, still more unequivocal, he adds that to him belonged, as his appropriate memorial, that name, which is declarative of the very essence of the Godhead. This Man therefore of the book of Genesis, this Angel of Hosea, who wrestled with Jacob, could be no other than the JEHOVAH-ANGEL, of whom we so often read in the English Bible, under the name of the "Angel of the Lord:" a phrase of an unfortunate structure, and so ill conformed to the original, that it is to be feared, it has led many into the error of conceiving of the Lord as one person, and of the Angel as another. The word of the Hebrew ill rendered "the Lord," is not like the English word an appellative, expressing rank, or condition; but it is the proper name JEHOVAH. And this proper name Jehovah is not, in the Hebrew, a genitive after the noun substantive "Angel," as the English represents it; but the words יהוה and מלאך, "Jehovah" and "Angel," are two nouns substantive, in apposition, both speaking of the same person; the one, by the appropriate name of the essence (rendering by its very etymology, the Λογος της

The supposition that the angel who wrestled with Jacob was a created being, seems to have been occasioned by a want of attention to the meaning of the term *angel.* It is "a name of office, and not of nature." It describes not the essence but the relative character of that to which it is applied. It is given to human messengers, to preachers of the Gospel, and the bishops of churches. It is indeed the name of created intelligent unembodied spirits, whether good or evil; but it is not confined to them. It is a title of the second person of the Godhead (if not also of the third)* appearing in a human form surrounded with light or glory. It signifies

ουσιας, if it may be permitted to apply logical terms to that which is above all the categories); the other, by a title of office. "Jehovah-Angel" would be a better rendering. The JEHOVAH-ANGEL of the Old Testament is no other than He, who, in the fulness of time, was "incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary." *Horsley's* Biblical Criticism. vol. iv. *p.* 313.

If this criticism of the learned Bishop be admitted, what a flood of light will it shed on the Scriptures of the Old Testament! It will lead us to look for JESUS, or JAH the Saviour, wherever the ANGEL-JEHOVAH is introduced to our notice.

* Dan. viii. 15, 16. Bishop Heber contends that Gabriel, who is introduced in the book of Daniel as the co-advocate of the Jews with Michael, must be a Divine Person, and is none other than the Holy Ghost. See the third of his *Bampton Lectures.* "He who is distinguished from the Archangel Michael cannot possibly be identified with the Second Person in the Triune Godhead. At the same time the language of the Person described by Daniel is no less inconsistent with the character of a finite or created intelligence." *P.* 213. *Second Edition.*

also the "created" unintelligent "agents or angels of material nature, that is the fire, light, and spirit or gross air, by which Jehovah acts and becomes visible to his creatures; whence they are called his angels, i. e. personators, instruments of action or visibility."*

In a subsequent narrative, Exod. iii, there can be no doubt who is meant by "the Angel of the Lord," since that Angel is called JEHOVAH and GOD, and declares of Himself to Moses, "I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And that the Divine Speaker is to be identified with the Angel who *appeared*, is plain from the remark of Moses, himself the historian of the facts, that he "hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God." St. Stephen's statement of the case confirms the original narrative in this point, Acts vii. 30—33. The appearance was that of the ANGEL JEHOVAH, who addressed Moses as the God of his fathers. In neither edition of the narrative is there any change of person stated or implied. In the history likewise of Manoah and

* These are included in the "hosts" which are ascribed to Jehovah, when he is called "JEHOVAH OF HOSTS."—"The compound JEHOVAH SABAOTH belongs properly to the Second Person, being his appropriate demiurgic title; describing not merely *the Lord of such armies as military leaders bring into the field*, but the unmade self-existent maker and sustainer of the whole array and order of the universe." *Horsley's Bib. Crit.* vol. iv. *p.* 317.

his wife, previous to the birth of Sampson, it is equally clear that "the Man of God," "the Angel of JEHOVAH," was JEHOVAH Himself, in the character of the Personator, the Revealer, of the invisible Godhead.* He speaks and acts as JEHOVAH, and is addressed as such by those to whom He appeared. Sacrifice is offered to Him, and He accepts it by the usual significant ceremony of fire consuming it.† Manoah expressly says to his wife that, in seeing the Angel, (for we read of no other appearance) they had seen GOD:‡ and his wife reminds him, that Jehovah, whom they had seen, had "received a burnt offering and a meat-offering at their hand." The Angel, in reply to an inquiry from Manoah concerning his name, assumed that significant appellation§ which is ascribed by the evangelical

* איש ה-אלהים might, without impropriety be rendered *a Person of the Aleim*; for the word איש has no relation to *kind* or *species*. And the words of the historian prove that, at the conclusion of the interview, Manoah knew that He, the person who appeared was מלאך יהוה הוא "the Angel of the Lord" (or, according to Bp. Horsley's version THE JEHOVAH ANGEL) "Himself." Manoah must have known before, as is plain from the narrative, that the person who appeared was an extraordinary person: but the concluding facts of the interview furnished complete evidence that He was a Divine Person, or a Person of THE ALEIM. Judges xiii.

† Is there not a mystery in the ascent of the angel *in the fire of the altar?*

‡ אל

§ פלא, rendered *wonderfully* in ver. 19. See *Allix's Judgment. p.* 109; and the LXX version of Isa. ix. 6, as quoted by him.

prophet to the child who was to be virgin-born, the Son who was to be given to man, who is also "the MIGHTY GOD." The Spirit of prophecy, while it ascribes to the incarnate Redeemer the name of THE WONDERFUL ONE, refers us back to all those mysterious appearances of his personal glory and mediatorial character, with which he had favoured the patriarchs, and carries us forward to the permanent manifestation of that glory in the person of JESUS the Christ.

The opinion I have advocated respecting the character of the wrestling Angel has the general voice of antiquity in its favour. It was held by most of the Christian Fathers; and "the ancient Jewish Rabbins," says Ainsworth, * "acknowledged this angel to be Christ."

Before I conclude my remarks on the history of Jacob, I shall, for a moment, request my friend's attention to a verse in Jacob's benediction on his sons, Gen. xlix. 18, which has perplexed all the commentators I have met with by the abruptness of its introduction, and its supposed want of connexion with the blessing on Dan which precedes it. Bp. Patrick, Mr. Scott, and others, have had recourse to a supposed exhaustion of the patriarch's strength as pro-

* "Our Doctors of blessed memorie (sayth R. D. Kimshi on Hos. xii. 14) have sayed, This angel was Michael; and of him he sayth, The angel that redeemed me from all evil. Michael is Christ the Archangel. Dan. x. 21. Jude 9. Rev. xii. 7."

ducing a pause in his prophetic discourse, and an expression of his feelings by an address to God in relation to his weakness as betokening speedy dissolution. It is admitted, that this is a very natural solution of the difficulty, if no connexion exists between his exclamation and the context; and that devotional fervour often breaks out in unconnected sentences.

But is it certain that there is no discoverable connexion between the devout aspiration of the patriarch, and the prophetic benediction on Dan which he had just uttered? On the fulfilment of that benediction in the history of the tribe I shall offer but one remark, as I have nothing to add to what has been often said on the subject. But before I make that remark, I will venture to call your attention to the imagery by which the prophecy is conveyed. It is that of a serpent in the high way, an adder in the path, biting the heels of a horse, and occasioning the fall of its rider. The image resembles at least that which is recorded in the third chapter of Genesis, and which we have at large considered, if it were not borrowed from it. In the Divine enigma of the first promise it was predicted, that the serpent should bruise, or wound by its bite, the heel of the Seed of the woman, and that the Seed of the woman should crush the serpent's head. Might not this Divine imagery, with which Jacob was doubtless well acquainted by tradition from his

fathers, have suggested to the patriarch's mind his prediction concerning the character of the Danites; and might not the woman-born Seed in that imagery have occasioned the memorable ejaculation which followed the prediction? "I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord." (Comp. Luke ii. 30.) If the prophecy of the character ascribed to the tribe of Dan, have, as commentators have supposed, a special relation to Sampson; my suggestion will derive some confirmation from the typical character of that extaordinary Nazarite descendant of Dan.*

I have already referred you to a passage which occurs in Jacob's blessing on Ephraim and Manasseh, the sons of Joseph; and as that passage shows both the satisfactory nature of the revelation which the patriarchs enjoyed, and the

* See Parkhurst on the root נוּר II, and the note annexed to it.—Bp. Patrick on Gen. xlix. 17, says, "They that refer the foregoing words to *Sampson*, make an easy interpretation of this *verse*, which is that *Jacob* foreseeing his great achievements for the deliverance of his children, prays that God would, upon all occasions, vouchsafe to send such deliverers to them from their oppressors. And the *Chaldee* Paraphrasts make him look beyond such deliverers to Christ, the great Saviour of the world. For these are the words of Onkelos (in the Complutensian edition, for they are not to be found in Buxtorf's or Bomberg's) *I do not wait for the salvation of Gideon the son of Joash which is a temporal salvation, or of Sampson, the son of Manoah, which is also a transitory salvation; but I expect the redemption of Christ the Son of David, &c.—Jonathan* and *the Jerusalem Targum* say the same." See also *Ainsworth* on Gen. xlix. 17.

extent to which they understood it, I lengthen my letter a little for the purpose of making a few remarks on Jacob's confession of faith recorded in it. In Gen. xlviii. 16, we find him addressing the object of his worship, from whose hands he expected the blessing he implored for his grandsons, as "the Angel who had delivered him from all evil." As the Angel-Redeemer, to whom he offered his prayer, is unquestionably the same Angel with whom he had wrestled at Bethel; and as the wrestling Angel is to be identified with the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, the Divinity of this Angel may be safely left to the unavoidable connexion which has been mentioned. But let us further remark the manner in which the Angel is introduced in the blessing on the sons of Joseph: THE ALEIM, before whom my fathers, Abraham and Isaac did walk,—THE ALEIM which fed me all my life long unto this day,—the ANGEL which redeemed me from all evil,—bless the lads. The word *bless* is in the singular number, and requires that the *supplying* ALEIM and the *redeeming* ANGEL be considered as essentially the same. The patriarchs were believers in the Divinity of their Saviour. They were strangers to the blasphemy and absurdity of attributing their salvation to a creature like themselves.

We may remark further, that the word which Jacob used to denote the character of his PATRON-

ANGEL, is the same by which Job, a few years afterwards, eulogized his REDEEMER,* whom he expected to see in his own nature, at the morning of the resurrection; and it is also the same word that is used as the title of the redeeming and vindicating Kinsman, in the typical ordinance of the ceremonial law.†

It is, my dear friend, the unvarying doctrine of the Bible, that "our help is in the name of JEHOVAH, who made heaven and earth."‡ It constantly and exclusively directs the attention of fallen man to JEHOVAH his *Maker* as being his *Saviour* also. It is JEHOVAH who says, "Look unto me and be ye saved all the ends of the earth; for I am *God*, and there is none else."§ No other foundation of confidence, —no other source of happiness,—is recognised throughout the Book of God.

But the New Testament demands the same attention, for the same purposes, for JESUS of Nazareth who was crucified, and thereby "made a curse for us." "Believe in THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, and thou shalt be saved." Is there then discrepancy, contrariety, inconsistency, between the two volumes of the same Scriptures, the counterparts of the indenture of mercy, "written," as all Scripture is declared to be, "by inspiration

* Job xix. 25. גֹּאֵל † Num. xxxv. 19, 21, &c.
‡ Ps. cxxiv. 8. § Isa. xlv. 22. מֵשִׁיחַ the Mediator.

of God?" Assuredly not: but then there is only one way of avoiding this dilemma,—and that is by identifying the JEHOVAH of the Old Testament, with JESUS* the Saviour spoken of in the New. Without this clew the Bible must be allowed to claim supreme regard to two different objects; whereas it informs us that there is salvation but in one Being, and that "there is no other name by which we must be saved but the name of Jesus Christ."

I am, my dear friend,

Your's truly,

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* JAH *the Saviour.* See Bp. Pearson on the Apostles' Creed.

LETTER XXXIII.

THE PRIESTHOOD OF THE PATRIARCHAL DISPENSATION.

MY DEAR FRIEND.

THE inquiry which has been instituted in our correspondence has brought us to a conclusion that Christianity is, substantially, as old as the occasion for the annunciation of that plan of mercy which God had previously determined to adopt for the recovery of man from his lapsed state. We not only have found, in the verbal promises of the period we have reviewed, a clear revelation of a gracious provision made for this purpose; but we have seen those promises illustrated by the institution of sacrifice, and by the appendages of that institution, the Tabernacle erected on the east of Eden with its Cherubim and Mercy-seat. We have sought and obtained an exposition of the brief notices of the patriarchal dispensation in the long train of symbolic observances which runs through the Levitical period; which symbolic observances were an enlarged edition of a Divinely communicated code of instruction, previously given to the progenitors

of the human race at the time of the Fall and of the Deluge. The notices of this typical instruction, recorded in the book of Genesis, are short and incidentally introduced in the narrative, because the historian was to give a full and explicit account of the whole system in his subsequent account of the Sinaitic Revelation.

The doctrine of sacrifice supposes a priesthood, or persons "taken from among men, and ordained for men in things pertaining to God, to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sin." As, therefore, rites of sacrificature were coeval with the Fall of man, we must date the existence of a priesthood back to the same period. And, indeed, since it has appeared in the course of our inquiry, that the ordinances of the patriarchal dispensation, as well as those of the parenthetic interval between it and the Christian dispensation, were all "shadows of good things to come," that is, of "truth and grace by Jesus Christ;" it is natural to expect, *a priori*, that the priesthood, as well as the sacrifice of Christ, should be found to have been prefigured from the time of the first promise of his advent and office. We might also expect to find that priesthood as fully exhibited in the type, as the nature of the case would admit.

I think we shall not be disappointed in these legitimate expectations, though I am aware of difficulties which lie in the way of that hypothesis on the subject which, after much consideration,

I have adopted. These difficulties arise out of the incidental manner in which the patriarchal institute is brought to our notice.

It is needless for me to enter on a laboured proof that typical priests existed before the Aaronic order. The previous existence of sacrificature renders such proof unnecessary. The question which I now propose to your consideration is this, Whether there were any persons specially set apart to this office by Divine designation, and who they were? Or, whether every one was at liberty to assume it to himself?

It was the opinion of the most ancient and eminent Jewish writers,* with whom a long

* Thus the Chaldee Targum paraphrases Gen. xlix. 3: "*Reuben, thou art my first born, and to thee belonged three portions, the birthright,* THE PRIESTHOOD, *and the kingdom.* Quoted by *Lightfoot* in his *Temple service.*. P. 18. See also the quotations *ex Mishnâ Talmudicâ,* the *Bereshith Rabba,* the *Jerusalem Paraphrast,* and *Onkelos,* produced from *Selden* by *Vitringa. Observ. Sacræ. Lib.* ii. *cap.* 2. The opinion also of *St. Jerom,** on the same side of the question, is there referred to. "Judæi et Christiani plerique sacerdotium ante Mosis tempora penes primogenitos fuisse, iisque sacrorum curam incubuisse, statuant. Opinionem illam, dignitatem nempe sacerdotalem primogenituræ privilegium fuisse, in Judæorum animo altè descendisse pateat, e plurimis illis quæ Cl. Seldenus congessit, Rabbinorum testimoniis. *(Lib. de success. in bon. defunct.* c. 5. *et Lib.* 1. *de success. in Pontificat. Lib.* 1.*)* E Christianis in eandem sententiam concedunt *Grotius, (Annot. ad Luc.* 2. 23*) Seldenus, (Lib. de success, in pontificat. P.* 110.*)*

* Tradunt Hebræi, quòd usque ad sacerdotium Aaron, omnes primogeniti, ex stirpe Noæ, fuerint sacerdotes, et Deo victimas immolari, et hæc esse primogenita quæ Esau vendidit. *St. Hierom. ep. ad Evagrium.*

succession of Christian authors, ancient and modern, may be found in unison from the time of St. Jerom down to our own, that the priesthood, during the patriarchal dispensation, was one of the prerogatives of primogeniture. And this opinion, derived from such early tradition, ought, surely, to be conclusive, unless the Scriptures afford evidence of its falsehood.

There have been, however, some authors of the highest character both for piety and for Scriptural and Talmudical knowledge, who have held a contrary opinion, and who have maintained that the patriarchal priesthood had no connexion with the privileges of primogeniture. Among

Bochartus, (de anim. sac. P. 1. *Col.* 575.*)* illi Reipublicæ literariæ triumviri, ut alios jam taceam non facile numerandos. In hujus autem opinionis subsidium, illius patroni (Gen. xxvii. 15.) *vestimenta illa desiderabilia* proferre solent quæ *Esau* primogenitus, tanquam muneris sui sacerdotalis insignia, gessisse creditur. Ita Judæos antiquitus existimasse, S. Hieronymum testantem audiamus: (*tradit Hebraic. in Gen. p .m.* 98.*) In hoc loco* (nempe Gen. xxvii. 15.) *tradunt Hebræi primogenitos functos officio sacerdotum, et habuisse vestimentum sacerdotale; quo induti Deo victimas offerebant, antequam Aaron in sacerdotium eligeretur.* Addunt insuper quòd Esau, non *ineptus,* sed (βεβηλος) *profanus,* ab Apostolo (*Heb.* xii. 16.) nuncupetur, qui αντι βρωσεως μιας, propter escam unam, jus primogenituræ vendidit, et facto illo sanctum illud Deo ministrandi privilegium se pro vili habere satis indicavit. Deinde, et illud afferunt, quòd Levitæ ad quos spectabat sacrorum cura Deo dati essent pro primogenitis, et eorum in locum surrogati: adeo ut quales erant Levitæ primogenitorum loco substituti, tales erant primogeniti, quamdiu loco jureque suo gaudere licuit. Hinc etiam argumentum

these I may mention Outram, Vitringa, Bishop Patrick, and Mr. Parkhurst, as having fallen under my own notice. After having read what they have written on the subject, I must own that, highly as I esteem their opinions in general, I am dissatisfied with their reasoning on this particular subject. But before I proceed to state my own views, it may be right that I should mention the objections to which I have referred.

The author who has written most copiously on the subject, so far as my information extends, is the truly excellent Vitringa. Mr. Parkhurst in a note on the word בכר, in the *third* edition of his Hebrew Lexicon, says, "The reader may remark that, in this third edition, I have not, as I

sumi solet, quòd Hebræorum primogeniti Deo *sacri* fuerint, et homines quos Deus præcipuo quodam jure (*Num.* viii. 17.) *suos* appellaverit. Illi verò, quos Deus *suos* et sibi *sacros* vocat, Deo ministrâsse et sacerdotium obiisse non temerè censeantur. Quibus omnibus adjungi solet, quòd Jacob Reubeni, filio suo natu maximo titulum illum *excellens dignitate* (Gen. xlix. 3.) tribuat; cujus, inquiunt, ratio vix ulla reddi potest, nisi quòd sacerdotium jure πρωτοτοκειων ad Reubenum pertineret. Ut his omnibus major addatur fides, Targum Hierosolymitanum, Onkelosum, Jonathanem, et alios e synagogâ magistellos, laudare solent. *Spencer. De Legibus Hebræorum. Lib.* i. *p.* 115, 116. Dr. Spencer has stated these opinions for the purpose of refuting them: whether he have succeeded in the attempt, the reader must judge for himself. He has at least shown, by this statement, that the voice of antiquity, Jewish and Christian, is in favour of the argument which he attempts to refute,—that the priesthood was one of the rites of primogeniture during the patriarchal dispensation.

did in the second, said any thing about the *priesthood's* being annexed to the *birthright*. My reason for this omission is, that, on attentive consideration, I think the texts which I there quoted for such annexation (namely, Num. iii. 12, viii. 16, Exod. xix. 22, xxiv. 5,) insufficient to prove it; and whoever will peruse the learned Vitringa's *Observationes Sacræ*, Lib. ii. chap. 2 and 3, will, I believe, be of the same opinion. The English reader may, for his satisfaction, consult Bishop Patrick's commentary on the several texts." Perhaps, were these texts the only foundation on which the affirmative opinion may be built,—were there no other evidence than what they furnish,—they would not be a sufficient basis for the superstructure. But I do not depend merely on the substitution of the Levites for the first born, spoken of in these texts. I shall have recourse to prior facts, and to an axiom of inspired authority on the general subject.

But I will first request your attention to Vitringa's view of the substitution to which the aforementioned texts relate. He thinks that the Levites are therein spoken of as contradistinguished from the family of Aaron; and that the substituted Levites are to be considered in the character of sacrifices and not of priests. He maintains therefore that this substitution of the Levites for the first-born had no relation to the

priesthood, but that as the lives of the first-born of the children of Israel had been spared, when those of the Egyptians were destroyed, and as the former were to be redeemed, as well as the firstling males of unclean animals which were unfit for sacrifice, by a sum of money; the ordinance respecting the Levites merely indicated the righteous forfeiture which had been graciously superseded in the case of the preserved Israelites. For a further explanation of his hypothesis, that the priesthood was not limited to any class of persons till the designation of the Aaronic family took place, and for the arguments by which he supports it, I must refer you to his own pages, and shall proceed to state my own views on a subject which is by no means unimportant in the inquiry to which my correspondence with you has been devoted.

It seems reasonable to expect that, as every thing else, relating to the service of God during the patriarchal era, was so particularly defined, and bore so exact a resemblance of what is afterwards more minutely enjoined by the Mosaic institute; the important article in the system of typical expiation, which relates to *the persons* to be employed in mediating with God on behalf of others, would not be left without Divine direction and limitation. If the time, the place, the species of animal victims, and the accompanying ceremonies, were all prescribed, as we have

seen that they were in the course of our investigation; is it likely that the question, "Who shall conduct the service"—would remain unanswered? Or, can we suppose that the solemn acts, which prefigured the great expiation, were allowed to be performed by every one who chose to engage in them? This is to me, *primâ facie*, utterly improbable. The same reason which influenced the Divine Legislator so solemnly to charge his servant Moses, that in his institute every thing should be done according to the pattern which was showed him in the mount, must have existed from the time of the fall for a similar orthodoxy in the hieroglyphic creed of the patriarchs.

The latter was typical as well as the former, and both had the same object in view, to prefigure what our Lord, as the prophet, priest, and king of his church, was to teach, to suffer, and to bestow, at his advent into the world. Any mistake in the ceremonial of religion would have led to a correspondent error in the expectations formed concerning the character, work, and grace of the great Deliverer; especially before any written revelation was afforded, while the orthodoxy of the creed depended on a series of symbols and their interpretation. I cannot therefore but suppose, that the instructions given to Adam, and from him derived to his posterity, were as full and precise as a preparative and

prefigurative dispensation admitted. When we recall to mind the precision of the ceremonial, surely we must infer that the functionary to be employed in it could not be self-constituted, uninstructed in the duties, or uncommissioned to the fulfilment, of his high momentous office.

The axiom of St. Paul (Heb. v. 4) that "no man taketh" the office of the Priesthood "on himself," but that he only can legitimately fulfil it "who is called of God, as was Aaron," is applicable not only to the period which followed the Levitical era, but to that also which preceded it. Indeed, with respect to all the essentials of the typical worship, these is no difference between the religion of the patriarchs and that of the Jews; and if a Divine designation to office was necessary in the latter dispensation, it was equally so in the former.

The objections of Vitringa and the other authors I have named, to a limitation of the patriarchal priesthood to the first-born, and to an admission that the priesthood was one of the prerogatives of primogeniture, are chiefly founded on instances in which those who were not the first-born sons of the patriarchs are stated to have engaged in sacrific rites. Such were Abel, Jacob, and Moses. But the view of the subject which I am about to propose to you, will not be affected by these cases, nor by the objections founded on them.

The view, then, which I take of the primitive institute, in regard to the priesthood, is this. On the death of a patriarch, the first-born male of a family, to whom the patriarchal blessing had been authoritatively assigned, or, if he were dead, then the elder surviving male branch, became, *de jure*, the HIGH priest; the priesthood and the civil supremacy of the patriarchal family being always united in the same person, as we know they often were in after times among the heathens,* whose institutions were corrupt imitations of the patriarchal creed and practice derived from tradition. The other sons were authorized to act as priests in some branches of the office, by a right derived from the elder born, and did at a certain age so act, even while the family continued united, and more especially when they were separated from the elder branch and new families were formed in distant places. The younger branches of the family would, of course, take a part in the worship of God, as they became capable of doing so, in subservience to the elder, and all in subservience to the first-born high priest.

There were, however, some branches of the sacerdotal office, during the patriarchal dispensation, which seem to have been confined to the first-born, as similar acts were confined under

* Rex Anius, rex idem hominum, Phæbique sacerdos. *Virg. Æn.* iii. *l.* 80.

the levitical dispensation to the high priest. Such was the act of pronouncing the patriarchal blessing, of which we have instances in the memoirs of Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; and which, as we learn from the case of Isaac, was preceded by a sacrific feast; and with this we may, perhaps, connect the act of special intercession. This prerogative descended from father to son in the line of primogeniture, unless any interruption of that line took place in consequence of immediate Divine interposition. *

This scheme connects the patriarchal worship with that of the Israelites after the formation of their hierarchy. The sons of Aaron derived their sacerdotal rank and privileges from him. In him those privileges were originally vested by Divine ordination, and from him they flowed to his posterity. But while the ordinary priests had a share in the sacerdotal functions, the duty of carrying the blood of the sacrifice, on the great day of atonement, by which the typical intercession was made, into the most holy place, and that of pronouncing the authoritative benediction on the people, were appropriated to him exclusively. These acts could not be performed by

* In the family of Adam, the birth-right was transferred from Cain to Seth; perhaps, in that of Noah to Shem; and in that of Isaac, from Esau to Jacob. I say *perhaps* in that of Noah, because it is not certain which of his three sons was the elder born. See the note on the subject, DIVINE INFLUENCE. *Discourse* III. *p.* 36.

his assistants in his high office. And since there was, as hath, I conceive, been rendered highly probable by a former letter,* a sacred tabernacle from the beginning, what prevents our ascribing the same duties to the sacerdotal first-born of the patriarchal family?

If, from the period of the first revelation to Adam, a sacred tent was erected for Divine worship, furnished with its appropriate furniture of Cherubim, &c; it will, I think, follow that this tent must have contained its several apartments, one of which was to be considered as the peculiar residence of Deity, from whose face, or presence, Cain is said to have been driven. And if there was a presence chamber of Jehovah under the patriarchal as well as under the following dispensation, it seems more than probable that there existed a similar sacerdotal institution under both, and that there was one chosen person in every patriarchal family, to whom belonged the peculiar honour and privilege of entering as the representative of that family, into the most holy place of the patriarchal tabernacle, the symbol of heaven, into which the great antitypical high priest of our profession was to enter in the fulness of time. If the way of access to God has been exclusively the same under every dispensation, can it be doubted that

* Letter XVI. Vol. i. p. 357.

this way has been made known under each, either by a symbolical or verbal revelation, or by both?

I need not enlarge on the connexion of this view of the patriarchal priesthood with the great antitype, whose acts and prerogatives the ritual of both the patriarchal and Levitical dispensations was intended to prefigure and illustrate. While every typical sacerdotal act had its accomplishment in Him, the Epistle to the Hebrews has taught us to consider, as His peculiar prerogatives, the intercessorial office in the sanctuary above, and the consummating act of His priesthood, His return from that sanctuary to address the assembled worshippers of God in the words of solemn benediction—"Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Math. xxv. 34.

Let us now review the several cases on record, which have been considered as inconsistent with the ancient doctrine of the Jewish and Christian church, that the priesthood was one of the prerogatives connected with primogeniture in the patriarchal dispensation.

It is objected that Abel, who was the *second* son of Adam, acted in the capacity of a priest, as well as Cain his elder brother. But you will observe that it by no means follows, from the adduction of offerings to the appointed place of worship, that either Cain or Abel acted as a

priest on the occasion; for, under the law, to bring the sacrifice to the priest was the office of the offerer at whose expense and for whose benefit the sacrifice was provided. And should it be urged that St. Paul has said, (Heb. xi. 4,) that "*Abel offered unto God* a better sacrifice than Cain," an examination of the use of the Greek word will prove that it does not necessarily denote a sacerdotal act; for it often describes the act of bringing the offering to the priest.* Moreover, no proof can be adduced that Adam was not himself present to fulfil the office of the priesthood. On the contrary, it is highly probable, as the offerings appear to have been presented on the Sabbath day,† and at the sacred Tabernacle,—and as the residence of Adam cannot be supposed to have been situated far from the place of weekly or perhaps daily worship;—that Adam was present to conduct the solemn ceremony. But if Adam was not there, nothing inconsistent with the view I have given of the duties appropriated to the patriarchal high priest is involved in the acts ascribed to either of his sons.

We proceed to the case of Jacob, to whom no sacerdotal act is attributed till he had obtained the birth-right; and nothing that is afterwards

* Comp. Math. v. 24. viii. 4. Acts vii. 42. xxi. 26.

† מקץ ימים, At the division of days, the end of the week.

recorded of him interferes with the office of the patriarchal high priest, till, after his father's death, and a short time before his own, he pronounced on his sons the patriarchal blessing, as Isaac had done before on himself and Esau.

But the case of Jacob demands a closer attention, as it seems to confirm the view which I have taken, at least, in some of its bearings.

The disgraceful bargain, by which Esau sold his birth-right, is stigmatized by St. Paul, in Heb. xii. 16, as a *profane* or impious act. Now, though a sale of the double portion of the patriarchal estate, for so trifling a consideration as a mess of pottage, might justly be considered as an excess of folly, it would scarcely have been spoken of as *profane*. What then besides the double portion of temporal goods did the birth-right imply, which could justify the Apostle's epithet in speaking of its sale? It included, doubtless, a relation to the promised Seed, in whom all nations were to be blessed,—to Him who was to appear in the flesh in the line of Abraham's posterity. But in what respect did the first born son of the patriarchs typify the future virgin-born Saviour of the world? Must we confine the prefigurative relation to the civil supremacy vested in the elder branch of the patriarchal family? Why may we not include the sacerdotal supremacy also, and consider the first born sons of the patriarchs, in succession,

as royal priests, prefiguring by their own complex prerogative the future high priest of our profession, who was to sit upon the throne of his father David, and of whose kingdom there shall be no end?" If therefore Esau sold such a prefigurative relation to the future Messiah, his conduct may well be stigmatized as "*profane*" and impious, and afford an apt image of that apostacy against which the Apostle is cautioning the Hebrews, when he produces the example of Esau as a warning to them. His dreadful bargain was disbelief of the great patriarchal promise, and contempt of the unspeakable gift which that promise insured.

The act of conferring the patriarchal blessing, as it is described in the 27th chapter of Genesis, appears to have been an act of a religious character, and to have been accompanied with many solemnities. A feast was prepared on the occasion, which I conceive to have been a feast on a sacrifice, and to have been of the same kind with that participation of the animal victims to which the Levitical priests were afterwards intitled by the law of their institution.* It is

* We need not infer from the English word *venison*, that the animal to be procured was to be of an unclean species, which the revelation made to Noah had prohibited for sacrifice. The term used may apply to any animal that is taken by hunting, or killed by the bow. "I will only add," says Mr. Harmer, (*Observations, vol.* iii. *p.* 150,) "with respect to the meat that

difficult to conceive in what other point of view such importance could have been attached, both by Isaac and Rebecca, to the trivial circumstance of a meal on the occasion.

But be this as it may: there is another more important feature in the narrative of this transaction. I refer to the manner in which Rebecca prepared Jacob for the solemn interview with his father. She "took goodly raiment of her eldest son Esau which were with her in the house, and put them upon Jacob her younger son." The smell of this raiment Isaac afterwards compared to "the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed." Now what was this "goodly raiment," (these garments of desire*) which is spoken of as belonging to Esau, and which Rebecca had under her care? Her tent was not that of Esau;

Isaac desired, that, perhaps, his desiring Esau to take his bow and arrow and to kill him some venison,—an antelope or some such wild animal, when a kid from his own flock would, as appears from the event, have done as well,—might as much arise from the *sparingness* natural to those who live this kind of life, together with the pleasure he proposed to himself from this testimony of filial affection from a beloved son, as from the recollection of some peculiar poignant flavour he had formerly perceived in eating the flesh of wild animals, though now his organs of taste were so much impaired as not to perceive the difference. So Dr. Shaw observes that 'the Arabs rarely diminish their flocks by eating them for food; but live chiefly upon bread, milk ..... butter, dates, or what they receive for their wool.'"

* See marg. reading.

for Esau was before married, and had doubtless, tents of his own, where his wives resided, and where, it might be supposed, his clothing would have been kept. And why should Esau's raiment be more fragrant that Jacob's? The manner in which this "goodly raiment" is spoken of leads me to conjecture that the sacerdotal robes in which Isaac used to minister, are intended, which, in consequence of the patriarch's age and infirmities, now belonged to Esau as the first born heir of the patriarchate, the forfeiture not having, perhaps, become known to Isaac till the providential interference respecting the blessing had confirmed the transfer.*

I refer briefly to the case of Moses, because Vitringa has produced it in proof that primogeniture was not essential to the patriarchal priesthood. It is certain that Moses sprinkled with the blood of sacrifices the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry; (Exod. xxiv. comp.

* "The priests under in the law," says Ainsworth on Gen. xxvii, "had holy garments to minister in, Exod. xxviii. 2, 3, 4, which the Greek there also calleth a *holy robe* or *stole*. Whether the first born before the law had such to minister in, is not certain; but probable by this example. For had they been common garments, why did not Esau himself or his wives keep them? But being, in likelyhood, holy robes received from their ancestors, the mother of the family kept them in sweet chests from moth or the like."—The Jerusalem Targum applies the notice which Isaac took of their smell, to the 'smell of the perfume of good spices, that should after be offered in the mount of the house of the sanctuary.'"

Heb. ix. 18, &c.) and that he is said to have been united with Aaron, in blessing the people.—(Levit. ix. 23.) But, surely, these cases are hardly in point. He was raised up and designated to a special office, and was an extraordinary mediator, for a short period, between God and his people Israel. His mediatorial office was executed only while an important change was taking place in the discovery of the Divine plan, during the interval when the patriarchal dispensation was giving way to the Levitical. His priestly functions ceased as soon as his elder brother Aaron was consecrated, and invested with the priesthood. And it may even be doubted whether Moses was any further engaged in the solemn benediction of the people, recorded Levit. ix. 23, than in sanctioning with his presence, as the Divinely appointed Legislator and Prophet, the solemn duty which Aaron was for the first time to fulfil, and which from henceforth became the prerogative, exclusively, of himself and of his succession in the pontificate. For it is said at ver. 23, that "Aaron," *solely* as it seems, "lifted up his hands and blessed the people," though Moses is mentioned in the following verse as concurring in the act. But, however this were, the single and peculiar instance of Moses does not appear to be decisive against the hypothesis I have adopted.

Allow me, before I conclude, to inquire whether

any further light is shed on this subject by the New Testament Scriptures. Our Lord is therein called "the first born of every creature," or, as the words may signify, "*the heir* or *Lord* of the whole creation;" (Col. i. 15.) "the first born among many brethren," (ver. 8.) His brethren the church of Israel, being called "the church of the first born which are written in heaven," (Heb. xii. 23.) as distinguished from the Gentile converts who are denominated in the next clause "the spirits of just men made perfect." Here then we have the primogeniture from which all spiritual privileges are derived, and by which believers become "kings and priests unto God," —the foundation of all religious worship, whether on earth or in heaven. Christ is the first born, preheminently such: but the other branches of the family, and some in a more particular manner as the "royal priesthood," become entitled, through him, and by virtue of brotherhood with him, "to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God" by virtue of his mediation. It is His incense that perfumes the offerings of his saints, and procures for them a favourable reception in the sight of God. It is the sweet odour of his priestly garment that obtains *the blessing* for us.

From the view which we have taken of the patriarchal priesthood, it appears, that, neither under the first nor second dispensation, has any instance occurred of a self-constituted or elective

ministration in the service of God. Under both economies the ministry was the result either of a special Divine appointment, as in the cases of Adam and Aaron, the first in their several successions; or of a prescribed succession, as in the first born priests of the patriarchal line, or in the sons and successors of Aaron. In the primitive Christian church, the ministry bore a resemblance of the priesthood in the two former dispensations.* Our Lord as the first born

* This is evident from the language used by St. Clemens Romanus, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, an epistle which was at one time read in the church as a part of the Canonical Scriptures. Clemens then, the friend and companion of the Apostles, writes thus: "In obedience to his commands, (those of our Lord Christ) every thing ought to be done in due order; our oblations ought to be made, and our religious offices performed, at stated and regular seasons, as well as at the places and by the persons, whom He, by his authority, hath appointed; that, being thus done according to his will, they may be acceptable to Him. Moreover to the high priest, by the Levitical law, are assigned his peculiar functions, and the priests and Levites each fill their proper stations; but the layman is to confine himself to such things as are commended to laymen."

The doctrine of the Church of England on the right of ministering in the congregation," or, of performing ecclesiastical functions, is clearly set forth in her 23rd article :—"It is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office of public preaching, or ministering the sacraments in the congregation, before he be lawfully called and sent to execute the same: And those we ought to judge lawfully called and sent, which be chosen and called to this work by men who have public authority given unto them in the congregation to call and send ministers into the Lord's vineyard."—If it should be a question who have "public authority given unto them in the congregation to call

High Priest ordained his apostles and the seventy disciples; and these, after his ascension, ordained others, from whom a succession has been derived to our own day. And we learn from the earliest fathers of the Christian church, whose remains are the highest authority on subjects whereon inspiration is silent, that the threefold order of Bishops, priests, and deacons, was borrowed from and built upon the model of the Jewish hierarchy in its high priests, priests and Levites. So far as the nature of a typical and antitypical institution would admit, there is an identity of character in all the dispensations of Divine mercy to man. The idea of shadow and substance,* of outline and the fully coloured drawing, is maintained through the whole process of God's dealings with his fallen creatures. This identity of character, reaching already through a period of nearly 6,000 years' continuance, and existing under all the varied circumstances of human

and send ministers into the Lord's vineyard;" the answer of our church, contained in her ordination services, is equally explicit, that Bishops, and Bishops only, have such authority. And such is the view taken of their successional authority, that, in her 26th article, she considers "unworthy ministers," men perhaps of an immoral character, and who may have been ordained by unworthy Bishops, as ministering "by CHRIST's commission and authority;" and on this Divine "commission and authority" she builds the efficacy of the word and sacraments to those who "by faith and rightly" (as to the temper of their own minds) "do receive them."

* Heb. x. 1.

society, affords one of the strongest external evidences I know, in support of the truth of the Scriptures and the revelation of mercy which they contain. Break either of the chains which form the bridge that connects earth with heaven, and you so far weaken the foundation of faith and hope. It appears to me that the essential identity of the threefold dispensation of what has been, in substance, *Christian* from the beginning, has not been sufficiently considered, and that the continuity of the original revelation with all succeeding revelations has not been duly maintained in all its complex bearings. And if my correspondence with you should shed any additional light on the subject, it will afford very sincere pleasure to,

My dear friend,

Your's very sincerely,

LETTER XXXIV.

THE BOOK OF JOB.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

In requesting your attention to the *Book of Job*, I have no design of engaging in the controversies which have taken place respecting the time when that patriarch lived, or the author of his memoirs. I take it for granted that he lived under the patriarchal dispensation, and that his memoirs were written, whoever was the penman, under inspiration of God.

My design in bringing this ancient document to your notice, is in unison with the general tenour of my correspondence with you. I propose to institute a brief inquiry into the scope and aim which the Holy Spirit had in view in causing these memoirs to be committed to writing. They were, perhaps, the first instance of verbal composition: they are, at least, the earliest which has reached us. We have no proof, previous to the existence of this book, that arbitrary characters were used in conveying

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information.* Hieroglyphics were previously in use; but this is the first specimen of literal communication. And may we not trace the wisdom and goodness of God in the revelation† of this

* Unless, indeed, Moses be supposed to have written this book after he had received the Tables of the Covenant, written with the finger of God; and those tables were the first means of instructing man in this most important science. Mr. Faber is of opinion that the book of Job was written by Moses after the delivery of the law from Mount Sinai, "because it contains an express reference to the punishment of idolatry by the civil magistrate." *Three Dispensations. vol.* ii. *p.* 265. A few lines before he had said, This is "what *alone* I deem the proof." This supposed proof is derived from chap. xxxi. 26—28. But what prevents our considering Job as speaking of his unseen Judge in this passage? Why should not פלילי be the *singular* of פלילים, used in ver. 11, with the pronominal suffix of the first person?—"This were an iniquity to be punished by my Judge."—See the note on the verse in Scott's Poetical Version of Job. The sin of *the heart,* as described by Job, could not be cognizable, either before or after the giving of the law, by the civil magistrate. *If* Moses therefore were the author of the Book of Job, I can discern no solid reason why he might not have written it during the time when he lived with Jethro. But see Horne's Summary of the opinions formed respecting its author: *Introduction to the critical study of the Bible.—vol.* iv. *Part* I. *chap.* iii. *Sect.* i. He says, "Upon the whole, we have sufficient ground to conclude that this book was not the production of Moses, but of some earlier age;" and he adds, "Bishop Lowth favours the opinion of Schultens, Peters, and others (which is also adopted by Bishop Tomline and Dr. Hales,) who suppose Job himself, or some contemporary, to have been the author of this poem: and there seems no good reason for supposing that it was not written by Job himself." *P.* 8. *second edition.*

† I cannot consider alphabetic writing to have been of human invention. The first notion of hieroglyphic writing was probably

wonderful art, with respect both to the importance of the art itself, and the time when it was made. The life of man, in the time of Job, was greatly shortened, a favour of no small value to believers of succeeding generations. This abridgment of human life rendered tradition more uncertain, as it had to pass through more stages of communication, and as the persons through whom it had to pass became increasingly liable to corrupt it. On this account it seems to have been necessary to human safety, that a more certain mode of communicating the important truths connected with the everlasting salvation of mankind should be adopted; and as soon as the necessity became urgent, it pleased God to supply the means of grace which were needed by his fallen and erring creatures. If we compare the goodness of God, in this instance of its manifestation, with the tenour of the Divine conduct which we have already traced, we shall find therein fresh motives to adoration, gratitude, and praise.

It is not to be supposed that the first written communication made by inspiration of God had for its subject any trivial or even secondary object. We may infer, *a priori*, that its scope and its aim must have been of the first importance, and that

derived from the symbols of Paradise and the Cherubim; and I apprehend that the improvement of the science in alphabetic writing was also derived from Divine instruction.

such a communication must have related to that which was vital in regard to the glory of God and the happiness of his creatures. This was the character of the first oral revelation in paradise, and of its accompanying ritual; this was also the character of those Divine communications which were made to the patriarchs; and this is the general character of all subsequent revelations from heaven. "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

With this clew, then, in our hands, let us humbly inquire into the scope and aim of this first written revelation from God to man. But before we proceed to do so, I shall lay before you one or two of the many opinions which have been formed on the subject. Some have supposed, perhaps influenced by the reference which St. James has made to the history of Job, (chap. v. 11.) that the book was written for the purpose of exhibiting a pattern of patience under afflictive dispensations of Divine Providence. But, if this object were of sufficient importance, (which I conceive it was not) to sanction the notion of its being the principal scope of the history; still it must appear, from a consideration of the dialogue, that, although the instance of patience and submission described in the two first chapters is truly admirable and calculated to magnify the grace of God which produced it, the dialogue which makes up the chief part of the volume, so

far from discovering any remarkable evidence of patience in the character of Job, manifests a temper of mind very deficient indeed in this grace. And as the dialogue between Job and his friends contains what may be called the moral of the book, it is there chiefly that we are to trace the scope and aim of the Spirit of inspiration in recording this part of holy Scripture.

It has also been maintained that the principal subject of the book of Job is the proof which is therein afforded, by the unequal distribution of good and evil to the righteous and the wicked in this life, that there is another life where the former will be recompensed and the latter be punished. That this is a legitimate inference from the facts recorded, is not to be denied; but that this is the main topic, the dialogue itself will disprove. The doctrine of a future state had been taught emphatically by the prophecy and translation of Enoch, and indeed by all the preceding instances of Divine Revelation; and it is most explicitly declared in Job's noble confession of faith, chapter xix. 23—27, as well as in many other passages of the book. But our present question relates not to all the Divine truths that are recognized in it; but to the chief intent that runs through it.

I proceed without further preface to state my own conviction on the scope and aim of this earliest written record of Divine Truth. And

therein I agree with Dr. Hodges and Mr. Faber, the former of whom, in a volume entitled "Elihu," and the latter, in his "Three Dispensations," have largely discussed the subject.

Mr. Faber truly says,* "The grand drift of all the three dispensations is the same, though the mystery of God may be developed in each with different degrees of clearness. Now that drift, as we have seen, is *to inculcate the doctrine of reconciliation with God through the agency of a predicted Mediator:* a doctrine, which (as Bishop Warburton himself allows) involves of necessity the doctrine of *a future state.* The great outlines of these doctrines were known, as we are taught, under the patriarchal dispensation."

In contemplating the character and sentiments of Job, before and during the series of his trials, I cannot fully concur with Mr. Faber. I cannot acquiesce in his assertion that "Job maintains the affirmative of the question, WHETHER A MAN'S OWN RIGHTEOUSNESS COULD, OR COULD NOT, JUSTIFY HIM BEFORE GOD." That his views of justification were clouded and indistinct, appears evidently from the whole course of the disputation, and likewise from the address of the moderator Elihu, and from the final decision of God Himself, who in the issue appeared to decide the controversy. But as the character

* *Three Dispensations. Vol.* ii. *chap.* vi. *p.* 279.

given of him in the opening of the book implies that he was by no means a stranger to the influences of the Divine Spirit, and as it marks Divine approbation of that character in its general features ; as no works done before the grace of Christ and the inspiration of his Spirit are good works, and since all such works have in them the nature of sin, and are not pleasant and acceptable to God ;—As it is not to be supposed that the patriarch, in the animal sacrifices which he offered before his trials commenced, acted without some understanding of the meaning of the rite, as it had been explained to preceding patriarchs—And as, in the course of the controversy, he professed his faith so clearly in the promised Saviour under the character of a Redeemer from the consequences of sin by raising the bodies of his redeemed from the grave ; from these considerations I cannot but think that Job, from the first, was a believer in the doctrine of Justification through Him who was to come. Instead therefore of comparing the state of Job, during the former period described in his history, with that of Saul before his conversion ; I should consider the state of Cornelius, or that of the converts of the Baptist, more correct parallels.

It is well known that believers in Christ, even after that they have received the atonement, sometimes remain for a longer or shorter time in a state of comparative darkness with respect to the

effects of the Fall and the necessity of an exclusive reliance on a Divine Righteousness for acceptance with God. They have substantially received the truth, but have not been enabled to attain that view of it, in all its provisions for human salvation, which St. Paul characterizes under the phrase of "the full assurance of understanding." And the outward afflictions and inward conflicts through which they are called to pass, have this among other gracious purposes to effect, viz. to humble them more and more, that they may at length be brought to glory in nothing but the Cross of Christ. This truth was remarkably exemplified in the case of St. Peter, whose self-confidence was effectually subdued by his awful fall, as it had been before checked by his sinking in the water; both of which were mercifully permitted for the purpose of increasing his self-knowledge and reliance on his Saviour, whom in a measure he before knew in his true character, and whom he had before trusted and loved.

The ground of the controversy between Job and the other disputants in the dialogue appears to me, then, to have been this. They unjustly inferred from the extent and severity of Job's afflictions that, though his professions of the true religion (for in this they all appear to have been believers) was externally fair and blameless, yet he must have been guilty, in secret, of idolatry

or other heinous crimes, or a merciful God would not have thus afflicted him. They appear not to have duly considered the evil and just desert of the original transgression, and of natural corruption; nor did they take into account the gracious designs of God in the afflictions of his people, their humbling and purifying effects. They seem to have forgotten the appendix to the original promise of a Saviour, that the serpent should wound the heel of the woman's Seed, that Seed being understood personally and mystically; and that this was connected with the salvation proposed in that promise. They knew nothing, of course, of the enmity which Satan had, in so striking a manner, discovered towards Job as a man of eminent piety; nor were they acquainted with the necessity for Job's being surrendered, for a time and under limitation, into the hands of Satan, in order that his integrity might be brought to the test, and God be glorified in the result of the grace which he had previously bestowed on the sufferer.

Under the influence of these imperfect views of Job's character and of the Divine purpose concerning him, they endeavoured to attach to him some flagrant transgression of the Divine law as the cause of his severe afflictions, and which would impeach his character as a servant of God. Instead of showing him as they ought to have done, that the just desert of sin, in its

root and essence, though it were never to break out into overt act, is death, and that consequently no measure of suffering, Divinely inflicted on any sinner, is unjust, or ought to be made a subject of complaint; instead of pointing him to the great atonement for sin, and thence inferring that Divine chastisement is mercy to a sinner; in the spirit of the pharisee in our Lord's parable, they assumed to themselves a moral superiority over their afflicted friend, and instead of proving his comforters, "they persecuted him whom God had smitten, and talked to the grief of one whom God had wounded." They seem to have had correct notions of the great truth, revealed under every dispensation, that "by the works of the law shall no flesh living be justified," as I shall presently show; but they had very confused views of the inferences which necessarily arise out of this doctrine.

Job also in his self-defence darkened counsel by words without knowledge. His views, as he has expounded them were more distinct than those of his friends; but he did not meet them on the right ground. God himself testifies that his servant Job had spoken concerning Himself the thing that was right, referring, as we may suppose, particularly to the noble confession which Job had made of his faith in the promised Redeemer. But, notwithstanding this, he had maintained sentiments inconsistent with that con-

fession, while justifying himself from the charge of gross criminality which his accusers brought against him. From chapter ix * I think it plain that he did not allege his innocence or personal righteousness as the ground of his hope towards God. But what he admitted in a general view of his case, and doubtless admitted with the utmost sincerity, he virtually denied while he complained of his sufferings as unmerited and severe; that very complaint proving the necessity which existed for their infliction in order to his further humiliation in the sight of God. In short, the state of Job's mind appears to me to be one that is not uncommon even under a more favoured dispensation: a state of mind which, perhaps, prevails more or less in every Christian —a state of inconsistency between the convictions of the judgment and the feelings of the heart, when those feelings are roused by heavy and long continued afflictions, or any other existing cause. Hence the wisdom and goodness of God in those temptations to which his people are subject, and which work together for their good, since they are made conducive (to use the words of Elihu, chap. xxxiii. 17) to "withdraw man from his purpose" of arrogating something to himself, and "to hide pride from man." The citadel of self-righteousness is exploded by the

* See also chap. vii. 20.

first effect of converting influence from above; but the destruction of the whole fortification is usually accomplished by a gradual process in subsequent operations of Divine grace, employing affliction of mind, body or estate, as its instrumental means.

That all the interlocutors in this dialogue were believers in the true God, and in the revelation he had made of himself to Adam and the following patriarchs, is I think undoubted. In the first speech of Eliphaz, wherein he ascribes the doctrine he maintained to a supernatural revelation made personally to himself (and there is no reason to question his veracity in that ascription) there is a direct recognition of the guilt and corruption of human nature. And as this passage is of great importance in the inquiry we have instituted respecting the scope and aim of the book, you will pardon an attempt to clear the meaning of this Divine Revelation from some obscurity which in our translation hangs over it. The words ascribed to the spirit who visited Eliphaz,* as they stand in our translation

* Chap. iv. 12—17. "Now a thing" (דבר a message or communication, viz. from God) "was secretly," without the privity of other persons, "brought to me, and mine ear received a little thereof. In thoughts," or rather amidst tumultuous thoughts, "from visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth on men: fear came upon me and trembling, which made all my bones to shake: Then a spirit passed before my face; the hair of my flesh stood up. It stood still, but I could not discern

are these, "shall mortal man be more just than God? shall a man be more pure than his Maker. Behold he put no trust in his servants; and his angels he charged with folly: how much less in them that dwell in houses of clay, &c." A Divine Revelation could not be necessary to instruct us, that man cannot be more just than God, or more pure than his Maker; I venture to submit to your consideration a slight alteration in the rendering of the particle used in both distichs of the verse.* "Shall miserable man be justified *without* ALUE," him who was to be made a curse for us; "or man," in his best estate, "be pure" be sanctified and made meet for heaven, "*without* his Maker," the sole author, as of his natural being, so also of his new creation, or of his restoration, as a fallen creature, to the

the form thereof: an image was before mine eyes, there was silence and I heard a voice, *saying* "Shall mortal man be more just than God? Shall a man be more pure than his Maker?" "The force and beauty of this passage cannot be equalled in all the compass of ancient or modern literature. Virgil's—Geli-dusque per ima cucurrit Ossa tremor—is flat compared with the 14th com. The 15th contains the boldest and most fearful picture that ever has been drawn of the effects of extreme horror." *Boothroyd's note.* See also *Good's note.*

* אנוש—האנוש מאלוה יצדק אם מעשהו יטהר גבר describes man as fallen guilty and wretched, while גבר implies a different state and character. For the meaning I ascribe to the Divine title אלוה I must refer you to my 22d Letter. The particle מ often signifies *without.* See *Noldius* (*p.* 545.) who refers to Esa. lvi. 11. Mich. iii. 6. Prov. xx. 3. Job xxi. 9. as instances in which it occurs in this sense. If מ be considered as the com-

image and likeness of God? If this rendering be admitted, a doctrine of the first importance, that which runs through the whole volume of Revelation, and which I suppose to be the main subject of this first production in alphabetic writing, is introduced as authoritatively conveyed to Eliphaz by a Divine communication.

That Job, though he complains of being hardly dealt with, and expostulates with God on account of the severity of his sufferings, does not stand wholly on his own righteousness, is evident from a part of that expostulation introduced into his reply to Eliphaz. In chapter vii. 20, 21, we hear him saying, "I have sinned, what shall I do unto thee, O thou preserver of men?* Why hast

parative particle, used, according to frequent examples, in a negative sense, the meaning will be nearly the same. "Shall miserable man be justified, not Alue; or shall man in his best estate be pure, and not his Maker." That is, shall a fallen creature be vindicated as free from demerit, instead of God in his afflictive dealings with him? or shall the best of men be considered pure, while God is charged with a want of purity of intention in causing his suffering. For this sense of the comparative particle see *Glassius*, (*p.* 483.) who cites Ps. cxviii. 8, Hos. vi. 6, Luke xviii. 14, 1 Cor. vii. 9, 1 Pet. iii. 17, &c., as instances of its use with a negative import.—Or, perhaps, the particle מ may be used in a still more common sense, and mean *before*. "Shall miserable man be just *before*," or in the presence of "Alue; or man be pure *before*," or in the presence "of his Maker." Either of these interpretations of the particle makes good sense.

* האדם Human nature—should the title נצר be supposed to mean a watcher or observer, still the watchfulness or obser-

thou set me as a mark against thee, so that I am a burden to myself? And why dost thou not pardon my transgression, and take away mine iniquity?" Here, surely, is confession of sin and supplication for pardon. Here is an appeal to the same personage of whom Eliphaz has spoken as the justifier of man under a cognate title, and whom Job himself afterwards calls his "Redeemer, the Living One."

The view which I have given of the erroneous notions entertained by Job's visitors, is confirmed by the short reply which Bildad makes to the observations which the afflicted patriarch had suggested in answer to Eliphaz. He supposes, from the equity and justice of the Divine mind, that the destruction of Job's children had been the consequence of some flagrant transgression which they had committed; and that if Job himself were, what he professed to be, a true servant of God, God would immediately interfere and reverse the painful circumstances in which he was placed. He implies, ver. 13, that Job had forgotten God, and that his hope was no better than that of a hypocrite. "Behold," he adds, God will not cast away a perfect man," one whose regard to his service is sincere; "neither will he help the evil doer." All this is

vation must be considered as having a merciful object, since the reference to it is followed by an earnest application for pardon of sin.

itself true; but its application to Job was uncharitable, and arose from a mistaken view of his case. It was an erroneous application of just principles.

The reply of the afflicted patriarch shows that his creed was correct, however greatly he failed in its application to his own circumstances. "Then Job answered and said: I know it is so of a truth; for how should man be just with" or before "God! If He," God, "should contend with him, he cannot answer Him one of a thousand." He adds, "Yea, though I were righteous," which he confesses he was not, "yet would I not answer Him;' but I would make supplication to my Judge." This surely is not the language of self righteous confidence; and though we find him appealing to God, chapter x. 7, "Thou knowest that I am not wicked;" we must necessarily conclude from what he had before confessed, that his self-vindication extended no further than to the overt act, and referred to the charges of ungodliness which his accusers had brought against him.

The speech of Zophar, chap. xi, proceeds on the same principle on which Eliphaz and Bildad had already spoken. It assumes that Job's professions were false, and that his secret conduct, could it be known, would give the lie to them. In Job's reply to Zophar, we find the following confession of faith, chapter xiii. 15, 16, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him, and I will

maintain my own ways before Him. He also shall be my salvation; for (or, although) an hypocrite shall not come before Him." What could he mean by maintaining his own ways before God, while trusting in Him for salvation; but that he would vindicate his own integrity against the charge of hypocrisy which had been brought against him. At the 20th verse he adds: "Only do not two things to me: then will I not hide myself from thee. Withdraw thine hand far from me: and let not thy dread make me afraid. Then call thou, and *I will* answer: or let me speak, and answer thou me. How many are mine iniquities and my sins! Make me to know my transgression and my sin."

Eliphaz in his second reply, chapter xv, again renews the charge of self-justification against Job, because he would not admit that he had been guilty of such sins as proved him to be a hypocrite, and that his professions of trust in God were insincere. Yet mistaken as he was in the character of Job, he plainly shows his conviction of man's naturally fallen state, and of the impossibility of justification by personal obedience. He asks, "What is man that he should be clean? and he that is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?" evidently implying that there is "corruption in the nature of every one that naturally is engendered the offspring of Adam."

The answer of Job is in the highest degree

impassioned. His spirit appears to have been exasperated to the utmost. Yet amidst his bitterest complaints and expostulations with God, nothing, I think, appears that can demonstrate self-righteous hope. The strongest expressions are, perhaps, in verse 17, where he denies that his sufferings were the fruit "of any injustice in his hands," of any fraud or violence in his dealings, and where he affirms that his prayer was "pure," or sincere. This surely is perfectly consistent with that hope in the promised Redeemer which he afterwards expresses.

In Bildad's reply Job is again charged with wickedness and ignorance of God. In his answer occurs that noble confession of his faith to which we have often referred, and which is introduced with such happy effect into the Burial Service of our church. The passage has given rise to much criticism; but there is very little difference in the sense which criticism has elicited. The meaning is well expressed in our English version, though perhaps there is no necessity for the words introduced in Italics, were the original more literally rendered. I shall not however take up your time by discussing the subject; but shall lay before you the version of Mr. Scott,* which he calls a *literal* one.

* The Author's poetical version is very beautiful.

O that, fair written in a faithful scroll,
Time in his archives would my words enrol!

Ver. 25. *For I know my Redeemer* is *the Living* One,
And he, the Last, will o'er the dust stand up:
Ver. 26. *And my skin* which *is thus torn* shall
be *another; And in my flesh shall I see God.**
Ver. 27. *Whom I shall see, even mine eyes shall*
behold on my side, and not estranged: My
reins are consumed within me.

Can this be the language of a man under the dominant influence of self-ignorance and self-righteousness?

My friend will recollect that, THE LIVING ONE† and THE LAST‡ are titles of our REDEEMING GOD,

O furrow them in lead; their letters give
Through endless ages in the rock to live.
" I know that He whose years can ne'er decay,
" Will from the grave redeem my sleeping clay.
" When the last rolling sun shall leave the skies,
" He will survive, and o'er the dust arise:
" Then shall this mangled skin new form assume,
" This flesh then flourish in immortal bloom:
" My raptur'd eyes the judging God shall see,
" Estranged no more, but friendly then to me.
" How does the lofty theme my soul inspire!
" I burn, I faint with vehement desire."

Mr. Good, in his Introductory Dissertation, and in his notes, has largely discussed this noble confession of the patriarch's faith; and both he and Mr. Scott, in concurrence with the Church of England, maintain its reference to the resurrection of the body in the last day. Indeed, the solemn manner in which it is introduced seems to preclude any less important view of his meaning.

* אלוה. See Letter XXII.

† " חי LXX. αειναος, eternal. See Deut. xxxii. 40. Josh. iii. 10, in the original." Scott's note.

‡ אחרון *the last.* Isaiah xliv. 6.

and that both have a peculiar propriety as introduced in connexion with the resurrection of the just. He will compare with the hope of Job, that of the Psalmist, (Psalm. xvii. 15) "As for me, I shall behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness." With the effect which this prospect produced on the heart of Job, he will compare the language of Ps. cxix. 81: "My soul fainteth for thy salvation." With the expectation which faith in the bosom of the patriarchal believer produced, that the present cloud over his experience was transient, that God would again appear "on his side, and not estranged from him;" may be compared the conviction produced in the heart of another man of God, when, after a season of darkness, and after he had been tempted to draw most unfavourable conclusions from it respecting himself, he was at length enabled to say, "This was my infirmity." Ps. lxxvii. 10.

That a confession of faith uttered during the patriarchal era should afford a suitable and animating expression of Christian hope and prospect for the use of the Christian church; that this confession should have comforted and supported believers in the most trying circumstances of human life; that it should have warmed their hearts with a confident expectation of a resurrection of their departed friends when weeping over their cold remains,—and with a

sure persuasion of their own resurrection to eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ, Job's Divine Redeemer, the ALUE whom he looked for in the flesh;—this surely must prove that the acquaintance which the patriarchs had with the great truths of Revelation was not so scanty and so limited as some have supposed it to have been. If the declaration of Job and that of our Lord, which are brought together in the opening of our funeral service, be compared; wherein does the latter exceed the former in the perspicuity of the revelation which it affords in regard to the foundation of human hope, unless in the personal application to Himself which our Lord makes when he says, "*I am* THE RESURRECTION and THE LIFE?" It appears to me that our Lord had the declaration of Job in his recollection when he addressed Martha in these encouraging words; and He seems to say, "I am that person, the Divine Redeemer with whom Job, so long ago, professed an acquaintance, in whom he trusted, and for whose appearance he anxiously looked. I am the LIVING ONE, of whom he spake, who having life in myself as its source, have been the life, naturally and spiritually, of all who have believed in my name, and I am the same, yesterday, to day, and for ever. And at my second coming, I will raise, by virtue of my mediatorial right and power, the bodies of all those whose souls I have quickened to newness of life, from the dust

of death, wherein for a time they must lie, to a likeness of my own glorious body according to the mighty working whereby I am able to subdue all things to myself."

So far as we have pursued the subject of this letter, it has, I think, appeared that, although other most important ends might be proposed by this earliest part of the Divine record in the Scriptures, the principal object is to afford instruction in the great doctrine of the way in which God can be just and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus,* or (to use the words of Elihu) "to withdraw man from his purpose, and to hide pride from man." To reduce proud though fallen man to a consciousness of his own guilty, polluted and helpless condition,—to exalt the grace of God in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ,—to point out the nature of real Godliness, as consisting in Divine life restored to the soul by the quickening influences of God's Holy Spirit,—and thereby to re-qualify the fallen creature for giving glory to God, and for the enjoyment of Him, in communion with whom the happiness of a rational and immortal creature must consist.—This has been, directly or indirectly, the scope and aim of all Divine Revelation;

* Electicum porro usum contra eos præstat,—qui propriâ nituntur justitiâ, quam planè omnem destruit hic Liber. *Carpzovius.*

and it appears to me to have been the principal and direct object of the book of Job.

With a view to this we have set before us the history of a man whom the Searcher of hearts declares, at its commencement, to be "perfect and upright, and one that feared God and eschewed evil." These surely are features which belong exclusively to the regenerate character. They are not to be looked for in those who are strangers to Divine influence on their hearts. This man was, moreover, from the earliest account given of him, a worshipper of the true God, in the way of his own appointment, by faith in the great sacrifice which was to be offered up in the fulness of time. This he did, probably, weekly or daily; and with true parental concern for the souls of his children, a concern which affords a strong criterion of a renewed heart, he "offered burnt-offerings" for them "according to the number of them all.—Thus did Job continually." I know of no stronger evidence that can be adduced of a gracious state of mind, than the spiritualized anxiety of a parent for the eternal welfare of his children, their reconciliation to God and enjoyment of the influence of his Spirit, to enable them for his service here, and to qualify them for his glory hereafter.

The piety of Job, and his rank in life, rendered him a marked object of Satanic malice. Satan the accuser of the brethren in all ages,

disputed the sincerity of his piety; and God who had further objects in view than merely to afford the enemy an opportunity of bringing that sincerity to the test, permitted the accuser to do his utmost in sifting it. He was deprived, first, of all his property, and reduced from affluence to abject poverty,—then of all his children by one sudden blow,—and then of his own health, his body being brought under the power of a most grievous and painful disease. In addition to all this his wife became his tempter to apostatize from God to idols, and reasons with him on the folly of his adherence to the faith and the worship of Jehovah.

Under these unparalleled trials of faith, the patriarch continued unshaken in his fidelity to God, and not a murmuring word escaped from his lips. He said "Jehovah gave, and Jehovah hath taken away; Blessed be the name of Jehovah." And it afterwards appears, from his vindication of himself against the accusations of his visitors, that his previous life had been unimpeachable, and his conduct highly honourable to the profession he made as a servant of the true God.

Might not Job have said, according to the common notions of mankind, in the language of the young ruler in the Gospel, "What lack I yet?" Job was brought to the same trial which was proposed to that promising young man; but through the grace of God, he came forth

from that trial after a different manner. The trial proved that Job, with all his excellence of character, needed a better righteousness than his own for his justification before God. He was brought in the issue to feel what St. Paul felt when he wrote the latter part of the seventh chapter of his Epistle to the Romans. The sincerity of his previous faith was clearly evinced; but his humiliation before God was increased, and his faith purified and strengthened, by the issue of his trials.

The controversy with his friends related to the sincerity of his profession. They argued, though they knew it not, in correspondence with the design of Satan, as that design is stated in the first and second chapters. They were all professors of the true religion, and all, as I should think, however mistaken in their views of Job's character, sincere in that profession. This is not the last time that Satan has made the mistakes of real servants of God the means of bringing others, equally sincere, to the test, and, in the issue, of spiritual advantage to the tried saint. The overruling hand of God often permits his people to be thus tried, and his grace secures to them the blessing intended by it. Thus frequently, self examination is promoted, the remaining self righteousness of the heart is subdued, the believers' character is exhibited in a clearer view, and glory is brought to God. Thus

the trial of faith, which is much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, is found to praise and glory and honour at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

Job, though he was *essentially* right in the articles of his creed and in their application to himself, was nevertheless (to use St. Paul's phrase) "unskilful in the word of righteousness." Though, in vindicating himself from the overt iniquities with which his friends charged him, he maintained nothing but what was strictly true; yet he did not fully understand the Divine axiom that "whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth;" and therefore was at a loss to account for the severity of his afflictions, while the frailty he manifested in the use he should have made of the great principle of Divine Revelation, and in the temper which was excited by the irritating mistakes of his visitors, demonstrated the necessity of that severity. Impatience, want of submission, and the use of remonstrance with God, at times hardly consistent with that which becomes a sinner who looks for salvation by grace, frequently appear in his part of the dialogue. But can a Christian believer be at a loss for parallel instances. If he have himself been subjected to severe privations of property, children, and health —if moreover he have been buffeted by Satan— if his character and motives of conduct have been

grossly mistaken by Christian friends—may he not recollect similar aberrations from humility and meekness in his own spirit, if not in his own converse with others? The personal experience of a tempted Christian will afford the best commentary on the book of Job: others may discuss, with more critical skill, the circumstances of the history, but he only can fully understand its import.

Further evidence in support of the view which I have taken of the principal scope of the book of Job is furnished by Elihu, who is the last of the speakers, excepting Jehovah himself, who at length appears to decide the long contested points at issue between Job and his friends. But as I have already protracted my present communication to a great length, I shall trouble you again on the same subject in another letter, and am, in the mean time,

Your's faithfully,

LETTER XXXV.

THE BOOK OF JOB.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

As the concluding part of the book of Job, containing the speeches of Elihu and of the supreme Arbiter of the controversy, together with the sequel of the history, is calculated to shed great light on the inquiry which I have instituted on the subject of its design; you will, I am sure, pardon me for resuming the consideration of that subject. I shall first offer you a few remarks on the view taken by Elihu.

Who Elihu was, is a question on which a difference of opinion has arisen. Mr. Faber suspects that in this character Moses, whom he considers as the author of the book, "personates himself in his capacity of a teacher sent from God," and that "he is introduced as a moderator, at once to correct the error of Job, and to supply what is defective in the argument of his three friends." And he infers this from the circumstance that, at the close of the drama, "no

censure whatever is passed upon Elihu, though Job is made to confess his sinfulness:" and likewise because "he speaks of himself in the very same remarkable language, which in the Pentateuch the Lord applies to Moses. *Thou shalt be to Aaron instead of God,* and *I have made thee a God to Pharaoh,* says Jehovah to the legislator of the Israelites: *Behold, I am according to thy wish in God's stead,* says Elihu to Job respecting himself."*

There is something, certainly, very remarkable in the manner in which Elihu is introduced in the dialogue, and in the part he takes in it. He describes himself as a very young person, and yet makes high pretensions to inspiration from above, and assumes a right of censuring freely, and, I may add, with a tone resembling conscious infallibility, the opinions which had been maintained both by Job and his friends. I cannot however concur in the view of Mr. Faber that Elihu personates Moses; for, as Moses, even on Mr. Faber's own hypothesis was not contemporary with Job, he could not with propriety, (even if the dialogue be, as Mr. F. supposes, an allegory or parabolic drama) be introduced as addressing Job and his friends at a time perhaps antecedent to his own birth.

Dr. Hodges, in his "Inquiry into the princi-

* Exod. iv. 16. vii. 1. Job xxxiii. 6.

pal scope and design of the book of Job," conceives that Elihu was a type, and, perhaps, an actual manifestation of the Son of God, who on this occasion, as on many others, appeared in the anticipated form of man which he often assumed before his incarnation. That such a manifestation was not unusual in the patriarchal age, has appeared by the instances which have been produced in former letters; and that the present case was *dignus vindice nodus*, one that would justify Divine interposition, is plain, since a voice from the cloud of glory at length terminated the controversy. But the question, who Elihu was, must be determined by what he says of himself, for no other notice than the record of his address is taken of him either before or after his appearance. This is, of itself, an extraordinary circumstance.

Though I can determine nothing on this difficult question, I shall venture to lay before you an abstract of Dr. Hodges's reasoning on the subject, leaving you to form your own decision.

"Surprising indeed it may seem, to any impartial reader of this history, that so young a man should be invested with, much more that he should *claim*, so weighty an office, which required the highest abilities, and all the advantages of a superior character, to execute with success. Curious points of the most interesting nature were to be settled by this young arbitrator—the

long and sore distresses of the afflicted were to be at once relieved—various opinions, most tenaciously and warmly maintained, were to be adjusted to the satisfaction of each contending disputant. It may be demanded, it must be the question of a considering mind—What man—especially what young man, could be sufficient for such things—This extraordinary person is styled '*Elihu*, the son of *Berachel*, the *Busite*, of the *kindred of Ram*." *

"It is remarkable that when Elihu began to speak, 'the audience became all attention, all ear.' (chap. xxxii. 15.) They bear his rebukes and hear his majestic reasoning as the voice of one having authority. Unless Elihu had been confessedly and undeniably some extraordinary person, or known to represent such an one, Job and his three friends would scarcely have been silent; when so young a man was talking of himself in so high a strain; especially when he was reproving Job for ascribing too much to himself, and for glorying in his superior knowledge, and consummate integrity—yet we see this

* This account of Elihu is certainly very remarkable. In the Hebrew it stands thus—אליהוא בן ברכאל בחי משפחת רם, the literal version of which is *He himself my God, the son of the blessed God, the despised one, of the family of Ram*, that distinguished family which derived its name from Ab-ram its father and founder. So the Chaldee Paraphrast. That the character of "the despised one" is a Scriptural character of the expected Messiah, see Isa. xlix. 7. (*Lowth's version.*) and liii. 3.

person, without interruption or contradiction from Job or his friends, lays claim to a clear well-furnished head, and a sincere untainted heart, while Job and his friends, who, it might be supposed, would be greatly provoked, offer not a word in retaliation of his free and severe censure."

Job had expressed a wish, chapter ix. 33 and xiii. 20, 21, that there might be some days-man (*Marg.* umpire) between him and God; that God would withdraw his rod and his terror from him, in order that he might be able to reason with Him freely on his disastrous case. In reference to the patriarch's wish, Elihu says of himself, "Behold I am, according to thy wish, in God's stead: I also am formed out of the clay. Behold my terror shall not make thee afraid, neither shall my hand be heavy upon thee." "Could the mediatorial intercessorial office of our Saviour be more emphatically peculiarly expressed?"

But perhaps my author's strongest argument is that which he derives from the concluding confession of Job (chapter xlii. 5, 6.) I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now *mine eye seeth thee;* wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." He had before seen God his Saviour by faith, as he had declared chapter xix. 25; but he now saw Him with the eye of his body, and it was this which produced

the humiliation before Him which he felt. But how did he see Him, unless it were in the person Elihu? There is no visible shape ascribed to Him who spake out of the whirlwind; but that which he now saw was a real representation, not visionary but revealed to his corporeal sight.

It may moreover be asked, what became of Elihu, if he were a mere man, after the termination of the dispute? He does not appear to have joined in the worship that followed it, or to have received any commendation for the just sentiments he had expressed. He appears upon the stage of action without any previous hint of his presence, and he disappears without notice, unless indeed he be the person to whom Job makes his profession, who directs the sacrifice, and promises to accept the patriarch's prayer.

Such are some of the arguments which Dr. Hodges has adduced in favour of his hypothesis. I must refer you to his volume for a more enlarged view of them, should you wish to pursue the inquiry. I can only join in the modest sentiments of the amiable author on the subject, and say, "From what is said of Elihu, he may perhaps be supposed to be an assumed character or personal exhibition of the God-man as He was to appear, or, of God manifest in the flesh, which learned men have asserted Melchizedek to have

been. For my own part, I am afraid to call him a mere man; but would not advance any new opinion upon my own authority.—If, upon further examination, learned believers may countenance such a supposition, I shall be ready to come into an interpretation, which will render this character perfectly uniform and consistent throughout. In favour of it I beg leave to suggest, that by Elihu's not being mentioned originally in the second chapter among the friends of Job, and by his appearing all at once in the capacity of a moderator and judge upon the first mention of him, and just when the knot required and deserved a Divine Person to untie it, he seems to challenge an authority more than human."

We return now to our inquiry into the scope of the book of Job, to which Elihu's address affords a further clew. In assigning a reason for the displeasure which he felt against Job, he ascribes it to the circumstance that Job had "justified himself rather than God:" and afterwards in his address to Job, he says, chap. xxxiii. 8, &c, "Surely thou hast spoken in my hearing, and I have heard the voice of thy words, saying, I am clean without transgression, I am innocent; neither is there iniquity in me. Behold, he findeth occasion against me, he counteth me for his enemy." Such had been virtually the language of Job; on which Elihu remarks, ver. 12, "Behold in this thou art not just: I will answer thee,

that God is greater than man. Why dost thou strive against Him? for he giveth not account of any of his matters."

The strong language which Elihu imputes to Job might seem to imply that he was in a state of utter self-ignorance, and wholly ignorant of the promised Saviour—that he was trusting intirely to his own righteousness for acceptance with God, and was altogether unacquainted with the necessity of an atonement for sin and a stranger to faith therein. But as such a state of heart is inconsistent with a renewed mind, and as the testimony of the Scarcher of hearts, addressed to Satan at the opening of the history, proves that Job had been renewed in the spirit of his mind,—as his declaration respecting the living Redeemer shows that he was by faith acquainted with *His* character and office; we must not strain the charge of Elihu to the utmost point it will reach, but must take, as I conceive, a moderated view of Job's improper sentiments. The necessity of doing this will be confirmed by the subsequent testimony of Jehovah, that his servant Job had spoken of Him the thing that is right. (chap. xlii. 8.) We must therefore consider the self-exculpation of Job as reaching no further than his outward conduct; and his hard thoughts of the severity of God's dealings with him as founded, not on a claim which he made to Divine favour on the score of a personal obedience to

the Holy Law, such as God could accept without an atonement; but in ignorance of the intention of those corrective sufferings which had been laid upon him, and of the mercy which was mingled with them.

The statement which Elihu makes of the nature and design of God's afflictive dispensations, chap. xxxiii. ver. 14—29 was designed to correct the mistakes both of Job and his friends. Job had spoken of his afflictions as exceeding the demerit of his heart and life, and had failed of applying them to the end for which they were appointed, his humiliation before God. His antagonists, from the uncommon nature of his trials, had drawn and maintained an inference in direct opposition to truth and fact. As the Barbarians inferred, when they saw the viper hanging on Paul's hand, that he was a murderer whom, though he had escaped the sea, yet vengeance would not suffer to live; so Job's friends inferred that he must have been guilty of some flagrant transgressions, though he himself denied it, and though no evidence could be produced against him. So in the 41st Psalm, ver. 7, 8, the complainant says, "All that hate me whisper together against me: to myself they impute my calamity." They consider my afflicted state as a judgment upon me for my own sins. "Some cursed thing," the crime which they supposed to be the cause of the Divine judgment upon him, "presseth

heavily upon him, and when he is once down, he will rise up no more." * Another instance of the like uncharitable mistake appears in Ps. lxxi. 10, 11. "Truly mine enemies hold conferences about me; and they that watch for my life take counsel together, saying, God forsakes him, pursue him and seize him, for there is no deliverer." † In both these instances the Messiah himself seems to be the complainant.

In opposition to the uncharitable construction which Job's friends, in consequence of his heavy calamities, put on his past conduct, and in opposition to the erroneous views which Job himself had taken of his sufferings, Elihu, in the part of his speech to which I have referred you, states the nature and design of those chastisements which God lays on his servants. They spring from love to their souls; they are intended to be beneficial; they are made beneficial by the power of his own grace; they are indispensably necessary to salvation. They are the means of humiliation, and so prepare the way for clearer discoveries of a Divine righteousness. They have a renewing influence on the heart and life. Their effect is the fruition of the light of life. I transcribe the passage with this clew to its interpretation. ‡ "God speaketh once, yea twice, but man perceiveth it not." The voice of the outward Revela-

* Horsley's Translation. † Horsley's Translation.
‡ See the Author's work on "Divine Influence." p. 50.

tion, and that of providential goodness, are too often unheard, or little attended to, till affliction has softened the heart, and rendered the favour of God essential to our happiness. He speaks, perhaps, "In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed." In some such manner he had spoken to Eliphaz, as the Temanite had stated, chap. iv. 12, &c. But these means fail of producing the full effect intended by them. Thus God, at first "openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction; that he may withdraw man from his purpose and hide pride from man. He keepeth back his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing by the sword" of justice. But still the sinner needs further discipline; and therefore "he is chastened also with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain: so that his life abhorreth bread, and his soul dainty meat. His flesh is consumed away, that it cannot be seen, and his bones that were not seen stick out. Yea his soul draweth nigh to the grave, and his life to the destroyers. If there be a messenger with him one among a thousand to show unto man his uprightness; then He is gracious unto him, and saith 'Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom? His flesh shall be fresher than a child's: he shall return to the days of his youth. He shall pray unto God, and he will be favourable

unto him, and he shall see his face with joy; for He will render unto man his righteousness. He looketh upon men, and if any say I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profiteth me not; He will deliver his soul from going into the pit and his life shall see the light. Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with man, to bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living."

The adaptation of this discourse to the dispute between Job and his friends, is evident. It pointed out to Job the true reason of those afflictive dispensations, with which he had been visited. It taught him that God had acted in mercy towards him, and the spiritual benefit he was to derive from them. It corrected also the mistake of his friends, and showed them that Job's calamities had not been punishment for immoralities by him committed, as they had supposed; but that those calamities, grievous as they were, were intended to prepare him for further discoveries of Divine compassion, and to promote his most important interests.

The latter part of Elihu's speech, and that of the voice from the whirlwind are in the same strain. Perhaps, when Elihu commenced that part of his discourse which begins with the 37th chapter, thunder and lightning proceeded from the electric cloud, the symbol of the Divine presence, from which the Almighty afterwards

addressed the assembly. Such a circumtance must, as Mr. Scott has observed, have greatly heightened the propriety and animation of the sublime descriptions which followed. Those descriptions relate to the displays which are made of the wisdom power and goodness of God in the natural world. They were intended to prove that the dispensations of God, in the moral world, must be "holy, just, and good;" and that it is the duty and interest of man to submit to them, and to exercise faith under them.

The whole inference is drawn in the last words of the Divine Speaker, "Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty, instruct him? He that reproveth God, let him answer it." Chapter xl. 2. Of this contention with God Job had been guilty by want of submission to his afflictive hand. He had reproved or found fault, with the Divine wisdom goodness and justice by the remarks which, in the bitterness of his soul, and in the heat of the controversy, he had made on the Divine procedure. For this he had now to answer before Him, who had graciously interposed to explain his own mysterious providence.

In chapter xl. 3, Job is brought to a state of humiliation and confession. He "answered the Lord and said, Behold I am vile, what shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth. Once I have spoken but I will not answer: yea, twice, but I will proceed no further." He con-

fesses the folly and presumption of his past reasoning; and his mouth is shut in self-defence. The Almighty resumes his revelation of his own power and glory, and Job is further abased before him. He acknowledges, chapter xlii. 1. the power and sovereignty of God, confesses his own ignorance, and implores Divine instruction.—"His complete submission at verse 5, may not improperly be called the catastrophe of the poem. It is not indeed a change of Job's outward condition. It is an alteration infinitely more important and beneficial; an alteration in the temper and state of his mind. He is brought back to his duty, and his soul returns to its rest."* "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes." "The restoration of his health and prosperity quickly followed, and is the subject of the ensuing narrative."

In that narrative it is twice asserted by the voice of the Lord that his servant Job, (so called three times) had, in the main, spoken of Him the thing that was right, in opposition to the erroneous maxims of his opponents. While therefore Job himself had maintained principles inconsistent with his own state and character as a sinful creature, there must have been something more

* Scott.

offensive to God in the opinions of the other disputants. They had maintained that severe affliction is evidential of Divine displeasure, and that, consequently, Job was an apostate and a reprobate; while Job, in his own defence, denied their inference, and maintained that his conduct had not been such as to support their allegations against him. And, though he said many unbecoming things of himself, it cannot be admitted, consistently with the Divine testimonies which are borne to his character, and his own professions of faith, that he was under the influence of a dominant spirit of self righteousness, either before, or during, the continuance of his most severe trials.

The book of Job, contemplated as being, perhaps, the first in point of time, and certainly a very important part of that Scripture which is "given by inspiration of God, and which is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works"—demands more attention than is usually paid to it. It corresponds in its scope and aim with the above account of the Scripture in general after a very remarkable manner. It *reproves* and *corrects* the self-righteous notions, which, more or less, are striving for the mastery in those, who have been awakened to a conviction of their need of a Divine Redeemer from sin

and death. It affords *instruction in righteousness*, even that righteousness which is the ground of acceptance for prayer, of Divine favour here, and of the vision of God hereafter.* It corresponds in its scope and design, as Mr. Faber has remarked, with the scope and design of St. Paul's epistles to the Romans and Galatians, which, as being addressed to believers, must have been intended not merely for the conviction and conversion of sinners at large to the faith of Christ, but for the further instruction of persons who were already fundamentally acquainted with the doctrines of man's fallen, guilty and helpless state by nature, and of justification through faith in the name and righteousness of Jesus Christ our Lord. The theme of both is, "that God can be just and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus."† The book of Job begins and ends with a performance of those rites of sacrificature, by which "the offering of the body of Christ, once for all," was prefigured from the beginning.

If, my friend, the bias of the human heart to self-confidence be so great, that it discovered itself even in the converts to Christianity under all the advantages which they enjoyed from the dispensation of the Gospel;—If St. Paul's epistles to the Romans and Galatians were necessary for the correction of this evil, favoured as they had

* Chap. xxxiii. 24. † Ver. 26.

been with Apostolic instruction and the meridian light of the sun of righteousness;—If the Great Shepherd and Bishop of souls saw it needful to send an Epistle by St. John, full of sharp reproof, to the Angel of the church of Laodicea, to be by him communicated to his flock, charging them with the folly of esteeming themselves spiritually "rich and increased in goods, and in need of nothing;" while in fact they were "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked;"—Is it any wonder that Job, under his comparative disadvantages, betrayed the same spirit, and that corrective visitations, and Divine instruction were necessary to reduce his mind to that frame and temper, on which alone God can look with approbation, and in which alone His peace and consolations can be enjoyed? The declaration of Jehovah by his Prophet,* a declaration virtually addressed to every age and to every professor of Godliness, "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at my word,"—this annunciation of that which is essential to Divine favour, is remarkably illustrated by the book of Job. "Blessed" were "the poor in spirit," and such only, under the patriarchal dispensation. It is the determination of Jehovah, that no flesh shall glory in his presence. The salvation of a sinner

* Isa. lxvi. 2.

is the result of grace through faith in the Divine Atoner, and must be received as such, or it cannot be received at all.

The history of Job sheds light on God's method of procedure, in regard to his people in all ages. The heart of fallen man has always been the same,—reluctant to the admission of the gracious plan of salvation laid in the counsels of eternal mercy. But that plan is unalterable, not only because God has declared it to be so, but also because man, sinful and guilty, cannot, by any personal righteousness, obliterate the guilt he has contracted and reconcile himself to God. "The wages of sin is death." Conviction of sin is therefore the first act in the process of conversion to God. But this conversion is a gradual work of the Holy Spirit on the heart. And in carrying it on, affliction is employed: but affliction of itself, would avail nothing in humbling the proud heart of man, without a revelation of Jesus Christ. This progressively undermines and destroys the fortress of pride and self-sufficiency, and produces the conclusion to which the convert is at length brought, "Behold I am vile, what shall I answer thee?" It was thus that Job was brought to submit to the righteousness of God. "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." Tradition received from his fathers had, under the influence

of the Blessed Spirit, begun the work; but a personal sight of Christ was necessary to complete it.

The Christian of the present day may trace in his own experience the features of Job's case. He has been awakened to a concern about the salvation of his own soul. This concern has produced an habitual attention to the duties of religion, and he has fully received, as he supposes, the Gospel of the Grace of God. But he is afflicted in various ways. He seeks for comfort in his religion, and fails of finding it. He mistakes the object and design of his distresses. He is tempted to think hardly of God's dealings with him. Comforters, such as those who visited Job, being themselves ignorant of the ways of Divine compassion, by their misrepresentations, add to his distress instead of alleviating it. He is reduced almost to the borders of despair. In his extremity the Revelation of God in his word, (for direct communications are now unnecessary and not to be expected) applied to his case by "the Spirit of revelation in the knowledge of Christ," shows him wherein he has erred, points him to the cross of Christ, and comforts him by the exhibitions of grace which it furnishes. Thus, by degrees, he becomes established in the faith, and is prepared to join in the song of the redeemed, "WORTHY IS THE LAMB THAT WAS SLAIN."

The doctrine "of the justification of man," as maintained by our church, viz. That "We are

accounted righteous before God *only* for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by faith, and not for our own works and deservings," reaches back from age to age, to the very time of the fall. Bp. Horsley has maintained its universal prevalence among the faithful under every dispensation, when he says, "THAT MAN IS JUSTIFIED BY FAITH, WITHOUT THE WORKS OF THE LAW, WAS THE UNIFORM DOCTRINE OF THE FIRST REFORMERS. IT IS A FAR MORE ANCIENT DOCTRINE: IT WAS THE DOCTRINE OF THE WHOLE COLLEGE OF THE APOSTLES. IT IS MORE ANCIENT STILL: IT WAS THE DOCTRINE OF THE PROPHETS. IT IS OLDER THAN THE PROPHETS: IT WAS THE RELIGION OF THE PATRIARCHS." As a proof of this assertion I add, *It is the religion inculcated throughout the book of Job.*

I am, my dear friend,

Truly your's,

LETTER XXXVI.

EVIDENCES OF A PATRIARCHAL CEREMONIAL INSTITUTE.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

SHOULD my correspondence with you be found to bear no resemblance of the mines of the Western Hemisphere, from which British industry and skill promise to extract the precious metals in rich abundance;—should it rather resemble those streams of the east, from whose sands the patient workman, by careful and persevering toil, separates some grains of gold,—yet neither my labour in writing, nor yours in reading my papers, will be altogether lost. Let the useless sand be washed away by the stream of time into the ocean of oblivion; but let the precious grains which are intermingled with it, be preserved. And if the latter should prove, compared with the former, ever so minute in quantity and few in number, your pains will be remunerated; for the doctrine of a crucified Saviour is more valuable than the finest gold.

In an early part of my correspondence with you I promised that, if your patience were not exhausted, I would, before I concluded the series, collect some traces of a patriarchal Ceremonial Institute to be found in the book of Genesis. I now address myself to a fulfilment of this promise; and though I shall be thereby obliged to lead you again over ground which you have before trodden, the walk may not be unprofitable, as a recapitulation on the subject I propose, will bring into one view the doctrine I have maintained, that salvation by a Divine atonement has been the revealed religion of fallen man under every dispensation in which he has been placed.

I go back then to the earliest trace of that religion in what is recorded as having occurred immediately after the Fall. In the interview which took place between God and his guilty and miserable creatures, at the time of their expulsion from the earthly paradise, I have attempted to show you what I consider to be evidence of a Divinely instituted ritual, illustrative of the gracious revelation of the promised woman-born Redeemer. If I have not deceived myself, we have, in the short notices which Moses has recorded, intimations of the institution of sacrific rites, of an appointed place where those rites were to be performed, and of symbols of *His* presence whose wrath they were intended to propitiate, and whose favour they were intended

to regain. I have maintained that the doctrine of appeasement by the blood of animal-victims could not be the spontaneous product of the human mind, even if no traces of that doctrine had been found till long after a consciousness of guilt had perplexed it with inquiries about the means of atonement; and how much less likely is it, that such a mode of reconciliation with their offended God should have suggested itself to Adam and his partner in transgression at their first discovery of their need of pardon! Is it to be supposed that the criminals could have suggested, or if they could, would have ventured to suggest, at that awful moment, to their offended and injured Maker, a plan by which all his attributes were to be secured from impeachment, and themselves saved from the consequences of their heinous transgression?*

The Divine institution of sacrific rites, immediately on the fall, derives confirmation from the short history of Cain and Abel. In the act of worship performed by the children of Adam, which led to the first overt discovery of the enmity which was predicted as unavoidably to exist between the seed of the woman and that of the serpent, we have some further particulars as to time, place, and circumstantial items, in the accepted sacrifice of Abel. His offerings con-

* Magee on the Atonement, p. 283 and 307 First Edition.

sisted of the firstlings of his flock. They were of the same class of animals, of which the levitical offerings afterwards consisted, and they were the first-born of that class. The respect paid to Abel and his offering as contradistinguished from that of Cain, seems to have been manifested in the same way in which it was often manifested under the Sinaitic dispensation;* at the dedication of the Tabernacle, and afterwards that of the Temple, fire "*from before the Lord*" consuming the sacrifices which were offered.

When I consider the marked distinction which Moses has made between the two kinds of offering brought by the two brothers, the rejection of the one and the acceptance of the other, I cannot doubt that the latter was an act of thankful compliance with a revealed plan of salvation, and the other a wilful refusal of submission to it. Abel offered in faith; and his faith must have been founded on some discovery of the Divine will. It must have had a reference to something further than an acknowledgement of a God, and of dependence on his providence, since this was as fully expressed by the offering of Cain as by that of his brother; and if this had been all that was required, the act of Cain was equally entitled to the praise of being an act of faith. But the narrative is an early comment on the declaration of

* Comp. Levit. i. 24. Judges xiii. 19, 20. 2 Chron. vii. 1. 1 Kings xviii. 38.

St. Paul, that "without shedding of blood there is no remission" of sin.

There is a further intimation in the short history of Cain and Abel, which seems to mark the doctrine of atonement by sacrifice as of Divine origination, and to imply that the progenitors of our race were not left in ignorance of its necessity and import. When Jehovah is remonstrating with Cain on the temper of mind which the rejection of his bloodless offering had produced in him, He reasoned with him on the subject and said, Gen iv. 7, "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted; and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door:" the meaning of which seems to be this, "If thou wast not a a transgressor, thy acceptance would be insured by thine own innocence; and even as a sinner, a sin-offering, which will insure acceptance on another ground, croucheth at the door, that is may be at once found and offered on the altar. The Divine reasoning was intended, as I conceive, to point out to him the impossibility of acceptance with God without atonement for sin, and to convince him of his folly in refusing to comply with the prescribed method of obtaining reconciliation with Him, whose favour had been forfeited, and whose curse had been incurred, by the great transgression. The Hebrew word which is rendered *sin*,* very often signifies *an offering for sin*,

* חטאת (See Levit. iv. 4, 15. and Comp. Levit. i. 4. xvi. 21)

or the animal victim to which its guilt was imputed; and the verb * generally imports the resting posture of an animal.

If then it be admitted that Jehovah, in this expostulation with Cain, refers him to animal-sacrifice as the only acceptable way of access to Himself; and if He be supposed to account for the non-acceptance of Cain and his offering by its defect in regard to atonement for sin; it must, surely, follow that sacrifice was of Divine appointment, and that its object was not unknown to those on whom it was first enjoined.

That the interpretation which I have given of the address of Jehovah to Cain is the true interpretation, might be argued from the connexion in which it stands, the usual meaning of the words which are used, and the general intent of all intercourse of God with man. Indeed I know of no other interpretation that will comport with the evident design of the address. Its object was in unison with that of the Divine visit to our first parents in Paradise after their fall, and indeed with the whole volume of Scripture. It was to lead the sinner to his Saviour that he might be justified by faith in Him.

Exod. xxix. 14. xxx. 10. &c. &c. It is often rendered in the LXX. περι or υπερ αμαρτιας.

* רבץ Comp. Gen. xxix. 2. xlix. 9, &c. &c. And see Archbishop MAGEE'S work on the ATONEMENT. Page 59, and note 21. First Edition.

If every thing of our own invention and imagination be forbidden in the service of God,* and especially in that prefigurative service which was required previously to the coming of Christ, the accepted service of Abel must have been founded in a revelation from God! "What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: Thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it."—Deut. xii. 32.

The distinction which we find to have been made before the flood, Gen. vii. 8, and consequently before the use of animal food had been granted to man, must, I conceive, have had an exclusive relation to typical sacrifices. And as that distinction was Divinely recognized, the rite in which it originated must also have been so recognized; though the brief record of Moses does not state the time or manner of either recognition. It was a subject on which no new direction was necessary, for the purpose of discriminating one class from the other, when Noah was commanded to collect the animals which were to be saved in the ark. The silence of the historian of Genesis on this distinction seems to me to confirm what I have several times observed to you in the course of my correspondence, that the hints given in the

* Odit Deus cultum voluntarium, hoc est, illa opera quæ pro immediato Dei cultu illi offeruntur, cum ab ipso non fuerint præscripta et mandata ad hunc finem. Hoc enim est fornicari in adinventionibus suis. Ps. cvi. 39. *Davenant: in Coloss.* ii. 23.

concise memoirs of the patriarchal dispensation were intended to be explained by the subsequent account of the Sinaitic revelation. The patriarchal promise and ritual exhibited the stem of the tree of life planted for man in paradise regained after the fall;—the Levitical institutions were the branches and foliage;—while the Gospel history discloses to view its flowers and ripe fruits, of which we may say in truth, what is said of the Tree of Knowledge, that they are "good for food, pleasant to the eyes, and much to be desired to make us wise" unto salvation.

The act of Noah in offering sacrifices immediately after his liberation from the ark, the victims being taken from the clean animals which had been preserved by the command of God in greater numbers than the unclean, as we may suppose, for the express purpose of furnishing the means of renewing the important prefigurative rite; sacrifices offered without any new revelation of the necessity or manner of making the typical atonement, and which are expressly called "burnt offerings;" sacrifices from which "the Lord smelled a sweet savour," and from which he derived appeasement to the displeasure which the sins of the antediluvians had excited; This act of Noah bespeaks, I think, the Divine origination of sacrifices, and also its connexion both with the subsequent levitical institute, and with its antitype in the great sacrifice made for sin on the cross.

The prohibition of eating blood, which accompanied the first grant of animal food, is another speaking circumstance in relation to the patriarchal code of typical observances. Till man was permitted to feed on the flesh of animals, such a prohibition was unnecessary, and it therefore seems to have been unknown till after the flood, though the sin of cruelty was, alas, not unknown before it. When I compare this prohibition addressed to Noah and his sons, and the reason by which it is sanctioned, with a similar prohibition sanctioned by a similar reason in the levitical law, I conclude that both had in view the instruction of man in the doctrine of vicarious atonement for sin. In the first and shorter edition the prohibition runs thus, "Flesh with *the life thereof, which is the blood thereof*, shall ye not eat." Gen. ix. 4. In the second and larger edition, Levit. xvii. 10, &c, it runs thus—"Whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, "that eateth any manner of blood; I will even set my face against that soul that eateth blood; and will cut him off from among his people: for the life of the flesh is the blood, and I *have given it to you upon the altar, to make an atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul. Therefore* I said unto the children of Israel, no soul of you shall eat blood." Surely this is an intimation which could not be misunderstood, that life was

to be substituted for life in the promised salvation by the woman-born conqueror of the serpent; and that "without shedding of blood is no remission."*

In the history of the holy patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who succeeded Noah, the practice of sacrific rites is continually mentioned. Wherever they pitched their tents, there they raised altars for the purpose of offering the appointed victims, the types of the Lamb of God who was to take away the sin of the world. And in the virtual offering which Abraham made of his son, and in the substitution that followed, both by immediate direction from heaven, there was a nearer approach to the thing signified than could be exhibited by the common sacrifices which were required. In this awful transaction, the patriarch, in a peculiar manner, saw the day of Christ, and rejoiced in the prospect.

In one instance of sacrifice offered by Abraham, in which a special object was proposed, he received an immediate direction on the subject. Gen. xv. 9. But although this is the only case in which such Divine instruction was afforded him, it will by no means follow that his previous acts of sacrificature were destitute of sufficient warranty. The direction in this peculiar case refers to the

* Comp. Matth. xxvi. 28. Coloss. i. 20. Eph. i. 7. See also John vi. 53, 54, 55.

several victims to be employed, and the special use which was to be made of them. They were not to be immediately consumed; but after having been divided were to be left untouched, while the patriarch waited to be a witness of the awful but gracious scene that followed. A previous knowledge of the general doctrine of sacrifice was required to his understanding the sequel of the transaction, when the symbol of the Divine Presence passed between the parts of the divided victims, thereby ratifying the covenant before revealed.

In the privileges of the patriarchal primogeniture we have found typical anticipations both of the Levitical priesthood, and of the priesthood of Christ, to which latter both the former are to be referred; and not of his priesthood only, but of his royal dignity also as the anointed King in Zion, to be fully illustrated at a time yet future, when "He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever," and when of his dominion there shall be neither limit nor end, till he shall "deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father." The patriarchal primogeniture prefigured his universal heirship, (Heb. i. 2.)—his claim to "all rule, and all authority and power."*

I am glad that I am able to confirm these

* See Heb. i. throughout, and the Old Testament citations therein produced.

views which connect the partriarchal with the Christian era, by the sentiments of the present Archbishop of Dublin, contained in his excellent "Discourses on the Scriptural doctrines of Atonement and Sacrifice," a work which cannot be too strongly recommended to general perusal.

"If the sacrifices of the *Law* appear to have been but preparations for this one great sacrifice, (that of Christ), we are naturally led to consider, whether the same may not be asserted of sacrifice from the beginning; and whether we are not warranted by Scripture in pronouncing the entire rite to have been ordained of God, as a type of that ONE SACRIFICE, in which all others were to have their consummation.

"That the institution was of Divine ordinance, may, in the first instance, be reasonably inferred from the strong and sensible attestation of the Divine acceptance of sacrifice in the case of Abel, again in that of Noah, afterwards in that of Abraham, and also from the systematic establishment of it, by the same Divine authority, in the dispensation of Moses—and whether we consider the Book of Job, as the production of Moses; or of that pious worshipper of the true God, among the descendants of Abraham, whose name it bears; or of some other person who lived a a short time after, and composed it from the materials left by Job himself; the representation there made of God, as *prescribing* sacrifice to the

friends of Job, in every supposition exhibits a strong authority, and of high antiquity, upon this question."—" If, in addition, this rite, as practised in the earliest ages, shall be found connected with the sacrifice of Christ, confessedly of Divine appointment; little doubt can reasonably remain on this head.—Let us then examine, more particularly, the circumstances of the first sacrifice, offered by Abel.

" It is clear from the words of Scripture, that both Cain and Abel made oblations to the Lord.—It is clear also that Abel's was an animal sacrifice—it is no less clear, that Abel's was accepted whilst that of Cain was rejected.—Now what could have occasioned the distinction?—the acknowledgement of the Supreme Being and his universal dominion was no less strong in the offering of the fruits of the earth by Cain, than in that of the firstlings of the flock by Abel—the intrinsic efficacy of the gift must have been the same in each, each giving of the best that he possessed—the expression of gratitude equally significant and forcible in both. How then is the difference to be explained?—If we look to the writer to the Hebrews, he informs us, that the ground on which Abel's oblation was preferred to that of Cain was, that Abel offered his in *faith*; and the criterion of this faith also appears to have been, in the opinion of this writer, the *animal* sacrifice—the words are re-

markable.—*By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts**—the words here translated *a more excellent sacrifice,* are in an early version rendered *a much more sacrifice,* which phrase, though uncouth in form, adequately conveys the original—the meaning then is, that by faith Abel offered that which was much more of the true nature of sacrifice, than what had been offered by Cain.—Abel consequently was directed by faith, and this faith was manifested in the nature of his offering—what then are we to infer? —without some revelation granted, some assurance held out as the object of faith, Abel could not have exercised this virtue: and without some peculiar mode of sacrifice enjoined, he could not have exemplified that faith by an appropriate offering—the offering made, we have already seen, was that of an animal—let us consider whether this could have a connexion with any Divine assurance, communicated at that early day.

"It is obvious, that the promise made to our first parents conveyed an intimation of some future Deliverer, who should overcome the Tempter that had drawn man from his innocence, and remove those evils which had been occasioned by the fall—this assurance, without which, or some other ground of hope, it seems difficult to conceive

* Hebrews, xi. 4.

how the principle of religion could have had place among men, became to our first parents the grand object of faith—to perpetuate this fundamental article of religious belief among the descendants of Adam, some striking memorial of the fall of man, and of the promised deliverance would naturally be appointed—and if we admit that the scheme of redemption by the death of the only begotten Son of God, was determined from the beginning; that is, if we admit that when God had ordained the deliverance of man, he had ordained the means: if we admit that Christ was *the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*, what memorial could be devised more apposite than that of animal sacrifice?—exemplifying, by the slaying of the victim, the death which had been denounced against man's disobedience: thus exhibiting the awful lesson of that death which was the wages of sin, and at the same time representing that death which was actually to be undergone by the Redeemer of mankind—and thereby connecting in one view the two great cardinal events in the history of man, the FALL and the RECOVERY—the death denounced against sin, and the death appointed for that Holy One, who was to lay down His life, to deliver man from the consequences of sin. The institution of animal sacrifice seems then to have been peculiarly significant as containing all the elements of religious knowledge—and the

adoption of this rite with sincere and pious feelings, would at the same time imply a humble sense of the unworthiness of the offerer; a confession that the death inflicted on the victim was the desert of those sins which had arisen from man's transgression; and a full reliance on the promise of deliverance, joined to an acquiescence in the means appointed for its accomplishment.

..... "Agreeably to these principles, we shall find but little difficulty in determining, on what ground it was that Abel's offering was accepted, while that of Cain was rejected. Abel, in firm reliance on the promise of God, and in obedience to His command, offered that sacrifice which had been enjoined as the religious expression of his faith; whilst Cain, disregarding the gracious assurances which had been vouchsafed, or at least disdaining to adopt the prescribed mode of manifesting his belief, possibly as not appearing to *his reason* to possess any efficacy or natural fitness, thought he had sufficiently acquitted himself of his duty, in acknowledging the general superintendence of God, and expressing his gratitude to the Supreme Benefactor, by presenting some of those good things, which he thereby confessed to have been derived from his bounty. In short, Cain, the first-born of the fall, exhibits the first fruits of his parents' disobedience, in the arrogance and self-sufficiency of reason; rejecting the aids of revelation, because they fell not with-

in *its* apprehension of right. He takes the first place in the annals of Deism, and displays, in his proud rejection of the ordinance of sacrifice, the same spirit which, in later days, has actuated his *enlightened* followers in rejecting the sacrifice of Christ."*

I conceive that these extracts from the valuable work of Dr. Magee, will induce you to read the volume from which they are made, if you are not already acquainted with it. It will indeed amply repay a perusal.

It is not necessary to the end I propose to carry my recapitulations further. Other ritual circumstances which have been noticed in the course of my correspondence will be recollected; and all will conspire to show that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." Hebr. xiii. 8. The doctrine of the Scriptures concerning Him is the same under every dispensation. During the "*yesterday*," of the Old Testament Church, whether patriarchal or Levitical, and in the present "*day*" of the Christian Church, He has been and is the one great object of Divine Revelation; the Sun of the whole system. The review we have taken illustrates the unity of the Divine plan, in every discovery made of his will to the fallen race of Adam. As the assertion which I have just quoted from St.

* Magee's Discourses, First Edit. *p*. 52, &c.

Paul, is relevant to the general subject of discussion, I shall trouble you with a few remarks on it.

It occurs in a treatise written for the express purpose of proving to the Hebrews, that there is a close connexion between the typical revelation of the former covenant, and that of which the Apostle was a minister ;—a connexion which extends backward not only to the Jewish economy, but to the patriarchal also. The nicety with which they are adjusted, the one to the other, like the complicated wards of the lock and its key, proves that they claim the same Artificer, and that that Artificer is omniscient and omnipotent. No finite skill, no finite power, could have contrived and executed such a scheme as that of which the Old Testament contains the complex representative shadow, and of which the New Testament reveals the substance that created it.

The assertion of the Apostle that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever," occurs towards the close of his treatise, after the Apostle had proved the connexion that subsisted between the types of Scripture and Christianity. This connexion he had largely and satisfactorily demonstrated; and he then builds on the demonstration of the subject which he had furnished, the important inference, that Jesus Christ is the Alpha and Omega of Divine Revelation, and that there has been, and can be, no

salvation in any other name but His. His atonement and righteousness formed the only foundation of pardon and peace and hope from the beginning; they are the only foundation now; and none other can ever be discovered.

You will have perceived that I connect Hebr. xiii. 8 with what follows, and not with what precedes it. I understand the Apostle to enter on a new subject at that verse, having concluded what he wished to say in relation to the duty which Christians owe to their spiritual guides and rulers, of which he speaks in ver. 7: or rather, he returns to the general subject of his reasoning, in order to found on it an exhortation to steadfastness in opposition to strange doctrine. And you will observe that, in enforcing this exhortation, he not only refers to the Levitical institutions, but he alludes also, in ver. 14, to the state and conduct of the patriarchs which he had before described in chapter xi. "Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach: For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come."

In the epistle to the Galatians the Apostle calls the law given by Moses, "a school-master to bring us to Christ," Gal. iii. 24. "The servant who attended the children of great men to their exercises and to school, was called *pædagogus*, a pedagogue; a Greek word signifying *a conductor of children*. The name was given likewise to the

servant who taught children their letters, and superintended their behaviour. They were generally persons of rigid manners."* In speaking of the Mosaic law under the notion of a school-master or pedagogue, the Apostle included the whole Sinaitic institute. The *moral* branch of it performed the part of a pedagogue as it proved the necessity of the promised Saviour, and the ceremonial branch aided in the same manuduction as it typified what that Saviour was to be, to do, and to suffer; and the law of Paradise, the moral branch of which, revealed before the fall in the prohibition of the Tree of Knowledge, and the ceremonial part, consisting in the doctrine of Sacrifice, performed the same office with respect to the earlier patriarchs. It conducted them to Christ, "the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." And my friend will observe that the Apostle has not said "the law" *is* "our school-master to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith;" but it *was*, it *hath been*,† such to all past generations. It not only illustrates the great doctrine of Divine Revelation, now that Christ is come, and we are enabled to compare the types with the things signified by them: but it was a sufficient guide to Christ, and to salvation by Him, during the periods which preceded his coming, whereby

* *Macknight.* † Γεγονεν.

multitudes have been made partakers of that salvation.

I conclude this letter with the sentiments of our venerable Reformers on the subject of the patriarchal creed, as they are expressed in the fourth of their homilies, the "Sermon of Faith."

"All these fathers, martyrs, and other holy men, whom St. Paul spake of" (among whom Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, had been expressly mentioned in the preceding paragraph of the Homily) "had their faith surely fixed in God, when all the world was against them. They did not only know God to be the Lord, Maker, and Governor, of all men in the world; but also they had a special confidence and trust, that he was and would be their God, their comforter, aider, helper, maintainer, and defender. This is the Christian faith; which these holy men had and which we also ought to have. And although they were not named Christian men, yet was it a Christian faith that they had: for they looked for all benefits of God the Father, through the merits of his Son Jesus Christ, as we now do. This difference is between them and us, that they looked when Christ should come, and we be in the time when he is come. Therefore, saith St. Augustine, the time is altered and changed, but not the faith. For we have both one faith in one Christ. The same Holy Ghost also, that we have, had they, saith

St. Paul, 2 Cor. iv. For as the Holy Ghost doth teach us to trust in God, and to call upon Him as our Father, so did he teach them to say, as it is written, 'Thou, Lord, art our Father and Redeemer; and thy name is without beginning and everlasting.' God gave them then grace to be his children, as he doth us now. But now, by the coming of our Saviour Christ, we have received more abundantly the Spirit of God in our hearts; whereby we may conceive a greater faith, and a surer trust, than many of them had. But in effect they and we be all one: we have the same faith that they had in God, and they the same that we have. And St. Paul so much extolleth their faith, because we should not less but rather more give ourselves wholly unto Christ, both in profession and living, now when Christ is come, than the old fathers did before his coming. And by all the declarations of St. Paul it is evident, that the true, lively, and Christian faith is no dead, vain, or unfruitful thing; but a thing of perfect virtue, of wonderful operation or working, and strength, bringing forth all good motions and good works."

I have dwelt the longer on this point, the nature of the faith which was exercised by the patriarchs, because I think that their knowledge has been, in modern times, reduced below its proper standard. It is certain that they lived and died in the exercise of a living faith in

unseen realities. I shall again recur to this subject in my next letter, while I am noticing some general objections which have recently appeared, to the doctrine I maintain. For the present,

I remain, as always,

Truly your's,

LETTER XXXVII.

OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED, AND MOTIVES FOR PUBLICATION STATED.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

I STATED in the first letter of the series which I have addressed to you my anxiety to comply with every request you could make; and I have verified my declaration by devoting all the scraps of time I could rescue from the multifarious duties which daily claim my attention to a compliance with the wish you had expressed. You have now added a second request, that I would make my letters public; and with this also, after long hesitation, I have determined to comply. But in conveying this compliance to you, I must apprize you of the reasons which have led me to it. For though your request had its due weight, yet I thought it to be incumbent on me to deliberate on the subject before I took so serious a step.

In coming to a determination, I have not forgotten that my sentiments might meet with opposition; nor that, on subjects on which so

little discussion, comparatively speaking, has taken place, I may have ventured, in some instances, on untenable ground, or may have expressed myself inaccurately. Especially I am led to fear that this may have been the case by a recollection of the manner in which my letters have been written. I have seldom been able to sit down to the employment with an expectation of an uninterrupted hour; but have often been obliged to seize on half hours of leisure, leaving paragraphs and even sentences unfinished, and to be resumed when, probably after a considerable interval of time, another half hour might be at my disposal. This, as I believe you well know, has literally been the case. I am therefore apprehensive, notwithstanding your kind expressions of approbation, that abundant proofs will be found of inaccuracy both in sentiment and style. If it be so, I must meet the consequences, pleading rectitude of intention and hope of usefulness as my only apology.

In order, however, that this apology may avail me, it is necessary that I should state what ground I have for the hope of usefulness which I indulge in giving publicity to my correspondence with you. And I know not that I can better give expression to that hope than in the language of one who was by no means friendly to the views I have taken. The concessions of an opponent are often of great consequence to the support of a

cause at issue. Such concessions I find made in the Bampton Lectures for the year 1824, from which I transcribe the following paragraphs.

"The most singular instance presented by the last century of a return in our own church to the consideration (not perhaps altogether uncalled for) of the typical and spiritual import of many portions of Holy Writ, is undoubtedly to be found in the rise and progress of the opinions termed (after the name of their first promulgator) Hutchinsonian. The pious and ingenious, though highly fanciful, supporters of these tenets, while in affixing with the most liberal, and it must be confessed, uncritical profusion mystical and spiritual meanings to the general text, and even to most individual words and expressions of Holy Scripture, they followed the example of their numerous predecessors in the same career, added to the theory of those predecessors one tenet perfectly, I am disposed to believe, novel and peculiar to themselves. They who had in an earlier day mingled the studies of philosophy with those of theology, had endeavoured to strain and divert the sacred text to the mystic adumbration of their own peculiar theories. But the school of Hutchinson, with an intention certainly more reverential, if not more reasonable, sought to find in the Mosaic records a true and divinely inspired *system* of physical as well as of spiritual truth, and to apply those records in that which

they believed to be their real and original, though recondite sense, to the correction of all philosophical theories of mere human invention. They appear also to have held, that all natural objects whatsoever, those perhaps especially the names of which are metaphorically used in Scripture, have a pre-ordained connexion with, and are thus designed as permanent and intelligible witnesses to, the existence of their several divine and spiritual antitypes.

" Upon the obvious defects of this system, it is unnecessary to dwell; but it should in candour be added (and the assertion may be made without the fear of contradiction,) that to the theological labours of this school our church is indebted for no trifling or inconsiderable benefits. Its advocates earnestly recommended, and diligently practised the study of the sacred language, the comparison of Scripture with Scripture, the investigation of the typical character of the elder covenant, and the perfect and universal spirituality of the new; that they never lost sight of the soundness of Christian doctrine, or the necessity of grounding evangelical practice upon evangelical principles. It cannot be remembered indeed without gratitude, that their views of the Mosaic and Christian dispensations were the views of men of no common intellects or attainments; that to this source, under one yet higher, we owe the Christian spirit which attracts and delights

and edifies in the pure and affectionate ministrations of Horne, which instructs and convinces in the energetic and invaluable labours of Horsley."*

The amiable spirit which the lamented author of the above extract has attributed to "the ministrations of Horne," he has himself most delightfully exemplified in the volume from which the extract is made. I never remember to have met with a polemic work (if indeed the temper which it breathes will admit of its being so designated) more free from all leaven of bitterness, or more replete with candour and kindness. The loss of the author of such a volume, after preaching the last of the lectures it contains, is one which must be felt by all its readers. But while I acknowledge and admire the liberality with which the author has treated the Hutchinsonian school, I regret that he had not investigated its tenets more closely,† as he would thereby have found that its disciples have expressly disavowed that which he attributes to them, the looking for "a true and divinely inspired *system* of physical as well as spiritual truth in the Mosaic records." They think, it is true, that

* Conybeare's Lectures. Lecture VII. *P.* 291.

† "My knowledge of the Hutchinsonian tenets is derived chiefly from the works of Jones, and from some latin treatises on the Theory, drawn up, if I am not mistaken, by Catcott." *P.* 294.

whenever the Scripture speaks of physical subjects, it expresses itself with accuracy: they think also, that its allusions to physical subjects are illustrative of spiritual truth, and that that prescient Being, who is the author both of nature and grace, intended that the former should be explanatory of the latter. They have, moreover, endeavoured to prove, (with what success every student who thinks it worth his while to look into their works must judge for himself) that the allusions to physics, which are found in the Mosaic records, and indeed throughout the Scriptures, are in unison with that system of philosophy, which modern experiment has recommended to universal adoption, and that this system is essentially the same with that which was received, and has been preserved in the remains of the earliest philosophy of the east. But I know not that any of them have maintained that the Scripture reveals "a true and divinely inspired *system* of physical truth."

I am ready to concur with the amiable author of the Bampton Lectures, that *some* of the Hutchinsonian divines have been very fanciful in their expositions of Hebrew words, and of the history contained in the Old Testament. But I cannot extend this censure to all of them. Excess was a natural consequence of "a return to the consideration of the typical and spiritual import of many portions of Holy Writ." But,

in the later writers of that school, the extravagance is corrected without an abandonment of the principle. The authors whom I would vindicate fully admit, in all cases, the literal sense of every passage to which they affix a secondary meaning; and I think they seldom or ever lay stress on such a secondary meaning without "comparing spiritual things with spiritual," and finding, or supposing that they find, in other parts of the inspired volume, what tends to confirm their application of the passage they endeavour to illustrate. So much, I apprehend, may be said of Jones and of Parkhurst, of Horne and of Horsley.

While "the Christian spirit of Horne" is allowed to "attract, delight, and edify;" and "the energetic and invaluable labours of Horsley," to be instructive and convincing;—while Hutchinsonian exhortations promote "the study of the sacred language, the comparison of Scripture with Scripture, the investigation of the typical character of the elder covenant, and the perfect and universal spirituality of the new;"—while the advocates of Hutchinsonian tenets, "never lose sight of the soundness of Christian doctrine, or the necessity of grounding evangelical practice on evangelical principles;"—there is, I should suppose, little danger to be apprehended from it, nor can it be said that they have had "numerous predecessors in the same career:"

at least, there is no relationship between the Hutchinsonian and the Alexandrian school; nor can the reveries of Behmen, or other enthusiasts, claim any kindred with critics who appeal for all doctrinal truth to the plain assertions of the New Testament, though they think that those assertions may be illustrated by physical phenomena and ritual prescriptions. But while my conviction that the author of the Bampton Lectures for 1824 has been a little indiscriminate in the animadversions which I have quoted, I must add my wish that, should any Reviewer think my volumes worthy of notice, they may fall into the hands of one who is of a like spirit with the amiable and lamented Author of those Lectures.

I cannot however part with Mr. Conybeare, without recommending to my friend an attentive perusal of the last lecture. His candid and gentle censures, on the interpretations of various passages of Scripture which he has specified, appear to me to be well founded; and his rules for interpretation to be solid and judicious.* He allows, in a peroration of the contents of his useful volume, "that an allegorical and spiritual

* Multum certè omnibus seculis passa est veritas a duobus hominum generibus—altero eorum qui omnia in allegorias et sensus (quos falsò vocant) spirituales vocunt—altero eorum qui omnia nudè ac ad literam exponunt. &c. Pocock Not. Misc. 176. quoted by Dr. Hodges in his Elihu. P. 45.

The rules prescribed by Hulsius are these—1. Ut litera textûs exactam contineat simultudinem, quæ mysticum illum sen-

sense is, in many parts of Scripture, consistent with and subordinate to the letter; and that this is not only established by the express authority of the inspired records themselves, (and not lightly to be questioned therefore by any one who truly believes in their real and immediate inspiration) but is not in the abstract liable to any objections drawn from its impossibility or unreasonableness, as a method of conveying to and impressing upon the human mind the great truths which concern our peace and salvation."* He afterwards adds, "It has been repeatedly urged in the course of these lectures, that it does not appear reasonable, I would even say logically possible for those who do acknowledge the real and immediate inspiration of Scripture, to evade the acknowledgment also of a secondary and spiritual sense actually existing in those portions of the Old Testament, so quoted or alluded to in the New, that even though we admit some few passages (and this perhaps were better abstained from) to be thus accommodated† (or

sum includat—2. Ut omnes contextûs circumstantiæ transitioni a literali ad mysticum sensum saltem non repugnent, si non jubeant—3. Tertia (seu lex) quæ præcipua est, ut mysticus ille sensus, qui dicitur, cum analogiâ fidei, quæ totam Scripturam pro fundamento habet, optimè conveniat. *Theolog. Jud. Pars prima de Messiâ. P.* 443. Quoted as above.

* *P.* 295.

† The author had before shown that the scheme of *accommodation* emanated from Arian and Socinian interpreters, and was

deflected, as Calvin has expressed it) to a purport foreign to their original intention, no Christian could, we should think, either justify himself, or benefit others, in the universal application of a theory so palpably derogatory, in its first and most immediate deductions, to the honour of the Gospel and its Divine Author."*

Upon Mr. Conybeare's own principles I cannot class together what he calls "the philosophical reveries of Philo and of Hutchinson." The philosophy of Philo has no pretensions to an agreement with the system of Physics which is now admitted to be placed, as to its essential characters, beyond all dispute; whereas that of Hutchinson is consistent with all the data which the experiments of modern science sanction, with which he maintains that all the notices of natural phenomena, found in the Scriptures, concur. The divinity of Philo is not that of the New Testament; whereas that of Hutchinson, by Mr. Conybeare's own acknowledgment, "never lost sight of the soundness of Christian doctrine:" Its views are founded on "a comparison of Scripture with Scripture," on "an investigation of the typical character of the elder covenant, and the perfect and universal spirituality of the new." And I believe that Jones and Parkhurst, Horne and Horsley, would

adopted for the purpose of evading the inferences which would necessarily follow from an acknowledgment of a direct connexion between the type and antitype.

* *P.* 299.

have agreed with Mr. C. in maintaining that the assignment of a spiritual sense to the Scriptures of the Old Testament, should be regulated, for the most part, by *quotation* or *allusion* in the New. And I hope that this has not been forgotten in the preceding sheets, nor, what Mr. C. calls the ancient patristical canon that "a mystical argument is of no force to prove articles of faith."* If, however, proof be found of any doctrine in the plain declarations of Scripture, it cannot be wrong to employ Scriptural images in illustration of such doctrine.

I should now proceed to state my reasons for complying with your request that I would publish my correspondence with you; but since I began my present letter I have met with another volume, of high authority from the talent and learning of its author, which contains some views of points discussed in my letters that are at issue with my own, with which I must endeavour to grapple in order to justify the latter. The volume to which I refer is *Davison's* "Discourses on prophecy, in which are considered its structure, use, and inspiration." The passages which I shall extract from this valuable volume contain the author's views of the intent of the types of the Old Testament, and the derivation of sacrific rites. The author says,

* Argumentum mysticum non valet ad probanda fidei dogmata.

"But then, the argument of Typical Prophecy has this previous question to be put, before the application of it can be made with any effect: Did the types impart any, and what degree, of information, concerning the greater verities which they represented, at the time of their institution, or only at the time of their completion? Seen through Christianity, the shadow is understood by the substance; the type thereby becomes a significant evidence now. But was it an evidence to the Jew, who was busied with the ceremonies, and who lived amidst the shadows? This is the point; and except by some solution of it, we know not how far we can make the types a vehicle of information, or prophecy of any thing to the Jew, in his own age, prior to the realities which superceded them; nor, without the same solution, can we judge either of the spirit of the law, in which the types were incorporated, or of the use of the other, the express prophecies. And since the language of some learned Divines has been so equivocal and involved, and that of others so remote from all sobriety, upon this material and most necessary subject, it is on that account the more pressing upon me to reduce it under some clear idea, before I can properly take from it any support, on the one side or the other, to my argument in the illustration of prophecy.

"I answer then to the question, that the sense

of the types was a *latent* one. It was not disclosed to the Hebrew worshipper. This determination is grounded on the clearest and strongest reasons: the testimony of the Scripture itself. When those types are instituted there is no discovery of their principle, no hint of their signification, joined with them. There is no one corollary of the law deducing their sense, or pointing their reference. They are incorporated simply in the prescribed Levitical worship. To supply their interpretation for the primitive worshipper, by *assuming* that it was given to him, would be an arbitrary judgment of our own, not only not warranted by, but irreconcileable with the Mosaic Scripture; whose silence, in such case, when so large a digest of the law is set down, is a complete negative testimony, repelling that assumption. I infer therefore that the sense of the types was not explained, because the explanation of it is not said, or implied, to have been given. It is Christ who holds the key of the types, not Moses: and whatever access the Jew had to the great significations of his sacrificial and ritual worship, he obtained it by the insinuation of prophecy, by imperfect and partial arguments, which could not go so far as to reveal the truth. But the law, as delivered, furnished no exposition of them. It remains, they were a covered mystery in their interpretation.

"A second reason enforcing the same judg-

ment of them is this, that the sacrifices of the law are so palpable and so explicit to their Christian sense, when they are interpreted at all, that had the interpretation of them accompanied their first ordinance, it is hard to say what room had been left for any of the minor subsequent discoveries of prophecy upon the same subject. The chief doctrine of the Gospel would have been revealed, not shadowed in the law." &c.*

In a subsequent page indeed the author makes a concession of some advantages derivable to the Israelites from their ceremonial law. He asks, page 194, "What shall we say? Did that law, during the whole of its appointed reign, afford no help towards a perception of the principles of the Gospel? And whilst we take from it the benefit of a more direct light, shall we deny to it all use towards any notion whatever of the Christian system?" To this he replies—"The explanation which I would offer on this point, concerning the Christian direction of the ceremonial law, is the following:—To the Jewish worshipper, his rites of offering, lustration, and sacrifice, presented perpetually the idea that some medium of purification and atonement was necessary to him, in his service, whether of practice, or worship. This was an idea obtruded upon him by the frequent and indispensable exaction of such rites. In the

* Davison's Discourses on Prophecy. *p.* 184, &c.

next place, I argue, that the insufficiency of those appointed means of approach to God, their insufficiency in respect of the soul and the conscience, would become more truly felt and understood, in proportion to the piety, seriousness, and probity of mind, of the individual worshipper; and that God designed to make them a vehicle of this instruction, concerning their own inutility and inefficacy to the great purposes of pardon and acceptance."—But is this all the benefit that was derived from the Jewish ritual before the coming of Christ? If nothing was communicated but the "necessity of purification and atonement," and "the inutility and inefficacy" of the typical service "to the great purposes of pardon and acceptance;" How did the patriarchs and the pious Israelites attain to peace of conscience and hope towards eternity? That they did attain to such a state of mind is certain from the books of Genesis, of the Psalms, and of the prophets? But on what foundation could it be built, unless they were led to infer from the type the thing signified by it?

If this view of the ceremonial code which confines its utility, not indeed intirely, but chiefly, to the time of its fulfilment, be correct, I have certainly, in much that I have written, drawn conclusions from premises which will not support them. But I must beg leave to call in question this limitation, and to persist in maintaining what

I have already stated,—my belief that the primary object of typical illustration was the instruction of those to whom the illustration was furnished before the appearance of the great Antitype.

I think it must be allowed that whatever knowledge the patriarchs enjoyed of the spiritual intent of *their* ritual, must have been communicated to their posterity, and that an equal degree of information, at least, must have been possessed by those pious Israelites who were partakers of a like faith. If therefore it should appear that the patriarchs looked beyond the type to the thing signified by it, it can hardly be denied that the enlightened Israelite did the same; and that however he obtained "the great signification of his sacrificial and ritual worship," the truth was revealed to him.

With a view then to ascertain the point, whether the patriarchs, and afterwards the Israelites, did understand the ulterior meaning of their several types, let us consider what St. Paul has said on the subject in the xith chapter of his epistle to the Hebrews. The celebrated acts of the patriarchs which he enumerates he ascribes to FAITH, and he tells us what that faith was: It was "the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen." It realized to their minds the invisible objects, of which their types were shadows. It was a principle "without" which, under any dispensation, "it is

impossible to please God." * It was a faith which looked to a reward promised to those who diligently seek God; and how could a mind, conscious of sin, look to a reward without knowing the way in which God was to be at once just and the justifier of a sinner? It was a faith by which Noah became an "heir of the righteousness which is by faith." It was a faith by which Abraham "looked" beyond the land of Canaan, the typical subject of the promise, "to a city which hath foundations whose Maker and Builder is God." I cannot but think with Bp. Warburton that, when our Lord asserts that Abraham rejoiced to see his day, and that he saw it and was glad, he "refers to a special revelation made to Abraham when he received the command from God to offer up Isaac; by which he was informed that the sacrifice then enjoined him, was a symbol of the method which God would really take for the redemption of sinful man, by the death and resurrection of his own Son." †

* "That faith is a necessary instrument in all these holy ceremonies, we may assure ourselves, for that, as St. Paul saith, without faith it is impossible to please God. When a great number of the Israelites were overthrown in the wilderness, Moses, Aaron and Phineas did eat manna, and pleased God: for that *they understood,* saith St. Augustine, *the visible meat spiritually. Spiritually they hungered it; spiritually they tasted it, that they might be spiritually satisfied.*" *Homily on the Sacrament.*

† Divine Legation. Vol. ii. *p.* 589—627. and the vindication in the second volume of Occasional Remarks.

"By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac—believing that God was able to raise him up from the dead, from which also he received him, εν παραβολη, *in a figure*."* It was a faith, in the exercise of which the patriarchs "died, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them and embraced them, and confessed that they were pilgrims and strangers upon earth;" and by which they were led to desire "an heavenly country." It was a faith which enabled Moses to esteem "the reproach of CHRIST greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt;" and what could this "reproach of Christ" be but the odium incurred by the Israelites on account of the expectation they indulged of a Divine Deliverer in the person of their promised Messiah?

But were it granted that no intimation had been given in the ceremonial code itself that the ceremonies which were so solemnly and significantly enjoined, had relation to a spiritual salvation, and to a temper of mind corresponding with the acts required; is there not in the very requisition of those acts more than a hint of their prophetic intention? Could the patriarchs, or the pious Israelites, suppose that an infinitely wise and gracious God would enjoin, under severe penalties, a series of trifling ceremonies,

* See Letter XXXII.

to be annually and even daily repeated, without any ulterior object? Was not such a system of religion as that imposed by the Sinaitic code, amidst thunderings and lightnings and voices, imposed with every attending circumstance that could give weight to them, calculated to impart very unworthy notions of the Legislator, if no clew was given to their interpretation? Under these circumstances I cannot conceive that the silence of the record, even were it absolute, is equivalent to a denial, "a complete negative testimony," or indeed any such testimony; or that it can be inferred from the want of direct information, that it was the intention of the Divine Author both of the law and Gospel, that the latter should not be understood by means of the former.

There is also in this view of the ceremonial code a restriction of Divine mercy which seems to me inconsistent with the whole design of Revelation. Assured that it was the Divine intention, from the time of the Fall, to make known to man the scheme of compassionate interposition on his behalf, which had been planned before the fall, that scheme of salvation which alone could save the guilty mind from despair, and inspire it with hope,—I cannot conceive that the information so essential to his salvation, was withheld from him. I am therefore persuaded (to use the language of our viith article) that "both in the Old and New Testa-

ment everlasting life is offered to mankind by Christ, who is the only mediator between God and man, being both God and man:" and that therefore "they are not to be heard which feign that the old fathers did look only for transitory promises." If faith be founded upon knowledge, and if the knowledge of a Saviour be the justifying principle, surely sufficient light must have been shed on the purposes of God in respect to the future redemption, to enable man to embrace it as his ground of hope. If man were left to suppose that "the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean," could atone for sin by a satisfaction to infinite justice, how unworthy of God must his views of the Divine character have been! In such a view the revelation which was given to rectify his notions of theology must have had a direct tendency to weaken devotion and to carnalize his soul.

The questions which I have agitated, in relation to the paragraph from Mr. Davison's able work, are not, How the information of the patriarchs and the Israelites was obtained, to what extent it went, nor whether it were general or confined to a few persons; but whether the types were so far intelligible as to be prophetic of the promised salvation, and a directory to faith in expecting it. The information might be derived, in some instances, from immediate

communications of the Holy Spirit, or from the visible exhibitions of the promised Redeemer which were sometimes granted; and in other instances from traditionary notices of what had been before revealed. With respect to the cultivation and enjoyment of the ulterior meaning of the types, the case among the more ancient Israelites seems to have been similar to that which obtained among the Jews after that the Gospel had been preached to them: for St. Paul, speaking of both, says, (2 Cor. iii. 14.) in relation to the former, that "their minds were blinded;" and in relation to the latter that "unto this day remained the same vail untaken away in the reading of the Old Testament." The blindness was not objective but subjective; it was not ignorance arising from want of the the means of information, but from unbelief and a rejection of the light afforded. In our own more favoured dispensation, the *opus operatum* of ritual acts is substituted by a corrupt branch of the Christian church for the thing signified by those acts; and can it be any wonder if, at a darker period, the ancient Israelites in general rested their hopes on the type, without looking beyond it? But the point I maintain is this, that sufficient light was afforded to direct the awakened and inquiring mind to the Redeemer who was to come, as we know that the mind of Job was directed; and that the ignorance which

existed was the result of hostility to the truth, and not of a destitution of evidence concerning it. St. Paul has plainly asserted that to the Israelites in the wilderness was *the Gospel* preached as well as unto us: (Heb. iv. 2) and that the reason why the word did not profit them was, that it was "not mixed with faith in them that heard it."

I am equally if not more surprised to find that the author on whom I have ventured to offer you some remarks has thrown a doubt over the Divine origination of sacrifice, if he has not given it up. He says, page 126, "If the rite of sacrifice conveyed to the antediluvian race that kind of information which some Christian divines have assigned to it, it would be one of the greatest prophecies. But whether we are justified in constructing the proof of a prophetic revelation, in any degree, out of that rite of primitive worship, is yet a question: for the case is, that both the *primary fact*, and the *explication* of it, are precarious in the argument. By the primary fact, I mean, whether sacrifice was a Divine appointment; and if it were, the next question is whether it were explained, in any degree, to the sense of the Christian atonement. All prophecy must be of God: and a type, or prophetic fact, can come into the census of prophecy, only by his ordinance of that type, or prophetic fact. That the first Sacrifice was by Divine Institution, is more than the text of Scripture will permit us to say. Its

silence, in such an article, an article connected with the very life of religion, suggests the contrary opinion."

If the true doctrine of sacrifice be "*connected with the very life of religion,*" is it to be supposed that the world was left in total ignorance of it, during four thousand years, till the coming of our Lord? Was there no life of religion till then? Is there the least probability that the mind of man, at so early a period as the time of Abel (not to go further back in the history) should have lit, by its own unassisted powers, without a Divine revelation, on an expedient so exactly adapted to prefigure the mode of atonement by the great sacrifice to be offered in the fulness of time for putting away sin; and that God should have adopted this human invention in His service? Is not the converse of this, at first thought, far more probable? But we are not left to infer the fact of Divine revelation on the subject from the improbability of its absence. Abel offered his animal victims *by faith:* (Heb. xi. 4.) And faith must have Divine revelation for its warrant. It has relation to testimony; and the evidence on which it builds is distinct from that of the senses, or the mere conjecture of the mind. Without this faith, the service which is performed is "will-worship." "Without faith," as the Apostle argues on the cases of Abel and Enoch, "it is impossible to please God." (ver. 6.) And

therefore, if there was no such original revelation sanctioning the rites of sacrificature, the offerings of Abel and Noah, &c, would be liable to the severe censure implied in the question, "Who hath required this at your hands?"—a censure passed on ritual acts performed without faith in the antitype to which they related; and that, after the Sinaitic revelation had given an undoubted sanction to such acts. But God had respect to the offerings of the firstlings of his flock which Abel laid on the altar, as He had also afterwards to those of Noah. And, in the case of Abraham, a direct command (necessary, not to the general duty of sacrifice before enjoined, but to the particular instance then required) was addressed to him on the subject. Gen. xv. 9.*

I cannot concur with Mr. Davison in his opinion, that the "silence of Scripture" on the "Divine institution of sacrifice, in such an article, an article connected with the very life of religion, suggests the contrary opinion." Does the silence of the book of Genesis on the obligation of a moral law suggest that no such obligation existed? The fact appears to be this, that Moses who had to relate the Divine origin both of the moral and ceremonial codes in his history of the Sinaitic institute, did not deem it necessary, in the brief memoir which he wrote of the fall of

* See *Outram de Sacrificiis, Lib.* i. *Cap.* i.

man and its results, to state what he had afterwards so fully to assert. And to me it appears clear that the rites Divinely enjoined to the Israelites, agreeing as they do substantially, and in many respects even circumstantially, with the patriarchal rites, were a renewal, rendered necessary by the corruptions of Egypt, of what had been before enjoined by the authority of God to Adam and his children. They were illustrations of the primary promise in Paradise that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head, and that the serpent should bruise his heel. In the doctrine of animal sacrifice there is nothing which human reason would have suggested as adapted to propitiate and please Him who asked, "Thinkest thou that I will eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?" Independently of its typical relation to the great holocaust, the sacrifice of animal life is abhorrent from all the conceptions we should form of the Divine nature and character.

I shall now proceed to state some of the many reasons which have influenced my mind in complying with your request to publish my correspondence with you. And as some of these are comprehended in the late Mr. Conybeare's concessions respecting the benefits resulting from the theological labours of Mr. Hutchinson and his friends, which benefits, he says, may be attributed to those labours "without the fear

of contradiction," I shall content myself with them. These benefits I hope may be renewed and furthered by my present publication; and as they are highly important, it is my earnest prayer that they may.

I. I hope that it may promote the study of the sacred language among my friends. I regret daily that I did not earlier seek an acquaintance with it, and have not prosecuted that acquaintance more diligently. Were my advice to be asked on the course of study which a young divine should pursue, the study of the Hebrew language would be the first thing I should recommend to him. Nay, I would urge it on all my *lay* friends, who have any time for the pursuit: it will soon engage their affections, and prove as pleasant as it will be beneficial to them. "Though I do not think," says Dr. John Robinson,* "every Christian is bound to understand the Scripture in the original languages, (that being impossible to the far greater number); yet I should suspect he made but slight account of his religion, who having capacity, opportunity, and leisure, neglected this or any other means of understanding the inspired writings in such a manner as would enable him to taste and relish the whole beauty

* In his "*True and ancient manner of reading Hebrew without points,*" quoted by the Bishop of St. David's in his *Motives to the study of Hebrew*, which I earnestly recommend to general consideration.

and force of them." That "the whole beauty and force" of the Hebrew original of the Scriptures cannot be given by means of any translation, has been maintained by many eminent scholars; and with this agrees an assertion found in the Prologue of the Wisdom of Jesus, the son of Siraeh. "The same things uttered in Hebrew, and translated into another tongue, have not the same force in them: and not only these things, but the Law itself and the Prophets, and the rest of the Books, have no small difference (or excellency) when they are spoken in their own language." This is true, and necessarily follows from the very nature and structure of the primeval tongue.

"Set apart," says Bishop Burgess,* "one hour of a Sunday for your Hebrew studies; and employ one hour every following day of the week; and in one fortnight you will know more of the Hebrew language than thousands of persons, who have had all the advantages of the most learned and expensive education."

I should have enlarged on the duty and facility of obtaining an acquaintance with that language in which the original revelation of a Saviour is transmitted to us, had not the learned prelate to whom I have above referred written on the subject, whose sentiments if consulted must be much

* Id. *p.* 27.

more influential than my own. I shall only transcribe a note which occurs in his 18th page: "That very learned and remarkable penitent Mr. GEORGE PSALMANAZAR, one of the authors of the UNIVERSAL HISTORY, in the instructive and entertaining Memoirs of his Life just published, has the following words, page 275. 'It is with a view of lessening, if not altogether removing, these fancied difficulties and discouragements, which have been the cause of that sacred tongue being so much, and I may add, so shamefully neglected, by the clergy especially, that I have ventured to write so far on that subject from my own experience; for let them think of or palliate it as they will, *such a neglect must of necessity be condemned by all who seriously consider how impossible it is to come at a true knowledge, not only of the Old, but I will be bold to say, of the New Testament, without a sufficient knowledge of the Hebrew.*'"*

II. Another encouragement which I have to publish my correspondence with you is the second of those concessions which Mr. Conybeare has made in favour of the labours of Hutchinsonian Divines. He admits that they "recommended and diligently practised the comparison of Scripture with Scripture." As

* The whole publication is only a small Tract, which will amply repay the reader for its purchase and perusal.

this mode of reading the holy Scriptures is most important to a right understanding of them, I shall think the time I have spent in my correspondence with you well employed, should the practice of making such a comparison be promoted by it. I regret that any edition of the Scriptures should be published without the marginal readings and references. The former, containing a literal version of Hebrew words is the best guide which readers, who do not understand the original, can follow; and the latter constitute an infallible commentary. On this important subject, the mode of studying the Scriptures, I quote an admirable passage from the late learned Bishop of St. Asaph, though I have before produced it in my discourses on "Divine influence."* It cannot be brought too often into notice.

The Bishop says, "I will not scruple to assert, that the most illiterate Christian, if he can but read his English Bible, and will take the pains to read it in this manner, (by comparing parallel passages), will not only attain all that practical knowledge which is necessary to his salvation; but, by God's blessing, he will become learned in every thing relating to his religion in such degree, that he will not be liable to be misled either by the refined arguments or by the false assertions

* Discourse IX.

of those who endeavour to engraft their own opinions on the oracles of God. He may safely be ignorant of all philosophy, except what is to be learned from the sacred books; which indeed contain the highest philosophy, adapted to the lowest apprehensions. He may safely remain ignorant of all history, except so much of the history of the first ages of the Jewish and Christian Church as is to be gathered from the canonical books of the Old and New Testament. Let him study these in the manner I recommend, and let him never cease to pray for the illumination of that Spirit by which these books were dictated; and the whole compass of abstruse philosophy, and recondite history, shall furnish no argument with which the perverse will of men shall be able to shake this learned Christian's faith. The Bible, thus studied, will indeed prove to be, what we Protestants esteem it, a certain and sufficient rule of faith and practice, a helmet of salvation, which alone may quench the fiery darts of the wicked."*

On such a comparison of Scripture with Scripture I have endeavoured to build every sentiment contained in my correspondence. How far in all cases this endeavour has been successful others must determine. But should my letters prove no further beneficial than by promoting this

* Horsley's Sermons on the Resurrection, &c. *Pp.* 221—228.

mode of studying the Sacred Volume, my aim will not have been frustrated: I shall have gained an important point which I proposed to myself. The Scriptures are their own best and safest interpreter. The plan proposed was adopted by the Apostles, (not to mention our Lord himself) who constantly referred to the Old Testament Scriptures in support of the assertions they made and the doctrines they taught, though they were conscious that they spake and wrote under the immediate influence of the Holy Spirit.

III. The third motive which I mention is the promotion of investigation in relation to "the elder covenant," as Mr. Conybeare has denominated the Hebrew Scriptures. On this subject I feel great obligations to the labours of Mr. Faber, who has brought his stores of learning to bear on it in all his publications. The church is his debtor in no small degree; and I am happy, as an individual member of it to acknowledge the debt I owe him. The Old Testament Scriptures have, as I conceive, been too little read and considered, even by pious students; many of whom neglect all its books except those which are devotional. But we have the highest authority for saying that they testify of Christ, which He Himself urged on the Jews as an imperative reason for searching them. And when this exhortation was given, there were no other Divinely inspired Scriptures in existence but those of

"the elder covenant." And when our Lord, after his resurrection, "expounded" to his disciples, in all the Scriptures, "the things concerning Himself;" the Pentateuch, the Hagiograph, and the Prophets, were His text: He spake of what was written in Moses, in the Prophets, and the Psalms. His own character and office afforded the clew to the interpretation He gave to His followers. This clew I have kept in my hand while I have been fulfilling your request. "The elder covenant" is the foundation on which the latter covenant is built; and an enlarged acquaintance with the former is important to a comprehensive knowledge of the stability and adaptation to the comfort of fallen man to be sought for in the superstructure which the Apostles have erected on it. To show the correspondence and relation which the two Divine documents bear to each other, has been constantly in my view; and if what I have written should create in any of my readers a livelier interest in the Old Testament Scriptures, I shall have found the reward I have sought for.

IV. "The perfect and universal spirituality of the New" Covenant has not been forgotten. Indeed as "the Law is a School-master to lead to Christ;" And as the Gospel is "the ministration of the Spirit" to which the letter of the Old Testament, was designed to be a manuduction; the course which I have taken has continually

borne on the final object of all typical prefiguration. The shadows have all been referred to Him, whose promised manifestation created them. Nor has it been forgotten that even the doctrines of atonement and justification have an object beyond themselves in the restoration of the fallen soul to the life of God, or a recovery of His image, and a capability for communion with Him, from which its happiness can alone arise. But I shall have to dwell more at large on this subject in my concluding letter on the practical inferences to be drawn from the subject of my letters to you.

Should it be objected to the publication of these letters, as well it may, that the same truths which it has been my endeavour to illustrate and enforce have been again and again brought forward to general notice by abler pens then mine; that in the invaluable discourses of the present Archbishop of Dublin, and by other modern authors of the first ability and learning, the great doctrine of Atonement has been traced and established in the most perspicuous and convincing manner; I acknowledge the fact with the liveliest gratitude to God for raising up such instruments to defend and explain His truth. But this acknowledgment does not expose another attempt, however feeble, to the charge of folly, or prove its inutility. Every man employed in any extensive field of action, has his friends who

will read what he writes, while the more able discussions of others, how greatly soever his superiors, fail of exciting the same degree of attention in them; and so paramount is the importance of the doctrines of Scripture with respect to the Fall, the Redemption, the Way of Salvation, the Influence of the Spirit, &c. that they cannot be too often stated, nor too earnestly pressed, in every possible shape that can be expected to create a personal interest in them. They ought from age to age, and from day to day, to arrest the eye and the ear by the publicity and prominence of their appearance, and by the variety of their garb. Like food prepared for a sickly appetite, the aliment furnished by the word of God, should be placed in the way of the moral invalid under every modification which is likely to recommend it to his fastidious taste. And therefore, however homely and unpromising the vehicle of information, presented by these letters, may prove, to my contemporaries in general, I would indulge a hope that, to some of my own friends at least, they will convey what will refresh and comfort and establish their hearts in their spiritual pilgrimage, while, like the patriarchs of old they are pursuing their way through this world to a better, a heavenly country.

If, my dear friend, your request should prove instrumental in producing any of the results

which I anxiously anticipate in publishing my correspondence with you, in ever so small a degree, or in ever so few instances, you will have reason to be thankful to God; and a fresh motive to love and gratitude towards yourself, in addition to many existing obligations, will imperatively constrain

Your affectionate correspondent,

P. S. While these pages have been passing through the press, Mr. Davison's volume on "Primitive Sacrifice," written in support of the paragraphs which I have quoted from his "Discourses on Prophecy," has fallen into my hands. All I can add to what I have already written, in consequence of a hasty perusal of that volume, is, that I see no reason for dissenting from the doctrine of the Homily which I have produced at the close of my last letter; that Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, had "a Christian faith," and looked for all benefits of God the Father, through the merits of his Son Jesus Christ, as we now do."

To this extract I subjoin a passage or two more from the same venerable documents. In Homily xxviii, Part 1, or, The Sermon for Whitsunday, our Reformers say, "It is evident that He" (the Holy Ghost) "did wonderfully govern and direct the hearts of *the patriarchs* and prophets in old time; *illuminating their minds with the knowledge of the true Messias*, and giving them utterance to prophesy of things that should come to pass a long time

after."—Again, in Homily xxv, or, the second Sermon on the Passion, they say, "if we have the same faith as they" (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,) "had, it shall be as truly imputed unto us for righteousness, as it was unto them. For it is *one faith* that must save both them and us, *even a sure and stedfast faith in Christ Jesus,* who, as ye have heard, came into the world for this end, that whosoever believe in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

St. Paul in Gal. iii. 8, has told us that "the Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed." And he adds, "So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham." *The Gospel* which was preached to Abraham related to the doctrine of Justification; and the faith which Abraham had in that Gospel was the same which Christians exercised in the time of St. Paul. But how this can be, if the faith of Abraham had no respect to the doctrine of atonement for sin, it is not easy to conceive. Indeed, the reasoning of the Apostle in the following verses (10—14) appears to me to imply that this doctrine was the principal object of Abraham's faith. What can "the blessing of Abraham," which was to "come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ" mean, but the redemption from "the curse of the law," which was to be effected by the vicarious sacrifice of Jesus Christ our Lord?

If no revelation was made to the patriarchs Who the promised "Seed of the woman" was to be,—If they were left in total ignorance of the all important doctrine of atonement;—it must follow that their hope of pardon and salvation must have been built on one who, they must have inferred from his origin, would be not only a mere creature but also a sinner like themselves;—it must follow that all

who were saved, from Adam to Moses, obtained pardon and hope towards God without any information how the curse of the paradisiacal law, which transgression had entailed on mankind, could be removed from them consistently with the claims of Divine Justice,—how the Divine threatening could fail of being fulfilled in its utmost extent, and yet the truth of God in that threatening be preserved inviolate. If true repentance be inseparably connected with faith in an atoning Saviour, and if love to God in the heart of a fallen creature be the effect of a revelation that God hath first loved us; it is difficult to discover how true repentance for sin, or love to a reconciled God, could have had any existence among the antediluvian patriarchs, on the supposition that they knew nothing of the great truth, that the Son of God was to be the propitiation for the sins of the whole world. Were the reasoning powers of the patriarchs so feeble and imperfect, that they discovered no difficulties in the justification of the ungodly which needed a Divine solution? could they be satisfied, so as to live in peace and die in hope, without even a hint that the pardon of their sins and their acceptance with God were to be provided for in a way that would be honourable to all the perfections of Deity, and adapted to their own state of guilt and helplessness?

The Scripture speaks of *knowledge* as being the root of all comfort, hope and holiness—"By his *knowledge*" or by the knowledge of Himself, "shall my Righteous Servant justify many." Isa. liii. 11;—"This is life eternal, that they might *know* thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." John xvii. 3.—And St. Paul tells us that the Gospel of Christ is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth;" and he assigns the reason why it is so, for "therein is the righteousness

of God revealed." Rom. i. 16. 17. Can we then suppose that justification, under a former dispensation, was enjoyed without any knowledge of the justifying or atoning Saviour; or that life eternal could be vouchsafed without any knowledge of the method by which it was to be restored to man? Was there an instrument employed as "the power of God unto salvation," in the early ages of that salvation, different from that which is now employed? Did the Spirit of Christ bear a testimony *then* varying essentially from that which he *now* bears; and did He lead mankind to hope for mercy without any discovery of the necessity or prospect of a satisfaction being made to Divine justice for the original offence and personal transgressions committed against God? Is it not easier and safer to infer even if it were true that no intimations are given in the Scriptures of the typical intent of sacrifice before the Sinaitic revelation, that Moses, whether he wrote his book of Genesis before or after his other books, intended that an omission on this subject should be supplied from his other books; than that God left his fallen but conscious creatures, for almost two thousand years, without any specific acquaintance with the method which his wisdom and mercy had devised, and determined to take, for the vindication of his own righteousness and the manifestation of his own glory, in the justification and salvation of believing and repentant sinners?

The argument derived from the defect of provision for the expiation of moral transgression in the Levitical sacrifices,* does not appear to me to have any weight. The guilt of sin, as an offence against the moral law of God, could only find an atonement in that sacrifice of which the Levitical offerings were types. They "could not put

* "Origin and intent of primitive sacrifice." *P.* 86, &c.

away sin as pertaining to the conscience." But will it follow from this admission that they were not intended to point the offerer to the future sacrifice of the Divine Redeemer,—that they were not *means* of pacifying the guilty conscience, as the doctrine of Christ crucified is at the present time? Their efficacy in removing ceremonial uncleanness, was *representative* of that which removes the guilt of moral transgression. They were seals and pledges, on the part of God, that atonement for sin should be provided, as circumcision was "a seal of the righteousness which is by faith. We attribute no atoning efficacy to the blood of bulls or of goats;—we ascribe no virtue to the *opus operatum* of offering such sacrifices: Faith in the great atoning sacrifice has been the instrument of pardon under every dispensation, whether faith have come by *seeing* or by *hearing*, by prefigurative rites or verbal description.

If we allow that man has been justified and saved, at any time, and under any circumstances, without an atonement for sin, as the object of faith in prospect or in retrospect; will not the Socinian fairly infer from this concession, that what was at one time unnecessary is always unnecessary? The necessity of atonement I consider to be founded in the unvarying righteousness of the Divine character; and the Scripture leads me to connect not only the pardon of sin, but all the exercises of the renewed heart,—all that prepares the soul for heaven, as well as that which entitles to it, with the atoning sacrifice of Christ. "There is salvation in none other."

In concluding these hasty remarks I shall only observe further, that there appears to me such a repugnance in the doctrine of animal sacrifice to any thing which the uninstructed mind of man would be likely to adopt in the

worship of God, and such an exact adaptation to the thing signified, the atoning sacrifice of Christ; that I find it impossible to bring my mind to believe the human invention of the awful rite. Besides,—that God should have adopted what man had devised, and should, through the long period of the Levitical era, have laid so great a stress on a merely human invention, is to me incredible, unless positive testimony can be produced in proof of the fact. Such *positive* testimony appears more necessary, considering the comparative degree of probability in the two schemes, to demonstrate the human than the Divine origination of animal sacrifice.

LETTER XXXVIII.

PRACTICAL INFERENCES FROM THE WHOLE SUBJECT.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I HAVE at last brought the plan which I proposed to myself, in complying with your request, to a close: and lengthened as it is, I know not how I could have shortened it; though I might easily have extended it, either by introducing other parts of the patriarchal history, or by enlarging on those to which I have called your attention. I shall be glad to find that Patriarchal Theology, as illustrating our Christian system, has proved equally delightful to you, as it has done to my own mind.

Though I have endeavoured to execute the task you have assigned me, and have finished what I had in view; yet I cannot lay aside my pen without pointing out to you some practical inferences which arise from the whole subject which has been before us. Such inferences, I conceive, naturally result from it, as are highly

important in the Christian life;—inferences which not only show the unity of that religion which God has revealed to man, in all times and in all places; but which prove the vitality of all its doctrines, the connexion of every member with the whole, and its essentiality to the perfection of the system in which it is contained. The scriptural system of Divine Truth resembles the natural body, as the latter is described in 1 Cor. xii. 14, &c. It consists of many members. And though some are essential to life while others are not so, yet all are required to the symmetry and beauty of the body; and all, with a view to their vitality and energy, must be pervaded by the same influence which connects and quickens the whole. I begin with the important doctrine of a Trinity of Persons in the unity of the Godhead; a doctrine maintained in both Testaments, and in both considered as a fundamental axiom of practical Divinity.

This momentous but mysterious doctrine is, I fear, regarded by many persons who admit its truth on the credit of Revelation, as being altogether of a theoretic character, and the belief of it as unconnected with "the life of God in the soul of man." I take a very different view of its character, and importance. It stands in close connexion with every other thesis in the Christian creed, and with all the exercises of the Divine life. And its relative association appears, to me,

to derive its best illustration from the analogy which I have described, and which I conceive to have been Divinely intended, between animal and spiritual life, their respective functions, and the influence by which they are severally originated and maintained. In that analogy I discover the *rationale* of our being baptised "in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;" each of these Divine Persons having his gracious office to fulfil in the regeneration and progressive sanctification of the fallen soul, and all acting in unison for the accomplishment of the grand effect. Therein I find the best comment on the Apostolic Benediction,—"the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost,"—compared with that which was prescribed to be pronounced by the Aaronic Priesthood, Num. vi. 24,—"Jehovah bless thee and keep thee; Jehovah make his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; Jehovah lift up the light of his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace."—"And they," Aaron and his sons in succession, "*shall put my name* upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them." Both in the Aaronic Benediction and the form of Baptism, the communication of the threefold NAME is the principal feature.

But I must be more explicit in stating the practical view which I take of the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity. You will recollect that

I have considered animal life as subsisting in three capacities, and as produced and supported by a threefold material agency. The necessity of vital air to its comfort and even to its existence is well known to the man who has been for a time inclosed in the chamber of a diving bell; as is the necessity of vital heat to the frost-bitten traveller, whose limbs have been rendered torpid and useless by the extremity of cold. Nor is the importance of the other condition of the heavenly fluid less essential to sensation, though we are, perhaps, less acquainted with the nervous system than we are with the other branches of the animal economy. In the spiritual system, "the fellowship of the Holy Ghost" produces and maintains spiritual life, whose existence and enjoyments are inseparably connected with "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God" the Father. This threefold life, which cannot subsist apart, arises from the threefold influence of a Triune Agent.

I shall not here repeat what I have already ventured to say on this mysterious subject in an early part of my correspondence. I advert to it again, merely for the purpose of recalling to your recollection the practical tendency of the analogical views which I have presented to your mind. While I receive the doctrine simply on the credit of Divine revelation, I find in its analogical illustration something at least which is compre-

hensible. In its connexion with Christian experience, it is brought (partially and imperfectly indeed, but still with some degree of satisfaction) within the grasp of my understanding. I seem therein to discern the reason of that awful declaration by which the publication of the Gospel is sanctioned, "He that believeth and is baptised," viz. "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,"—"shall be saved; and he that believeth not shall be damned." I find in this analogy a full justification of those clauses in the Athanasian creed which have been deemed uncharitable. They imply no more, in relation to spiritual life and the salvation of the soul, than would be implied in a similar declaration in respect of animal life, that *air*, and *heat*, and *light*, are essential to its existence and enjoyment. In this analogy I find the readiest confutation of error, and the easiest confirmation of truth.

In the doctrine of the Cherubim I find another important though subordinate image of the same vital dogma of Biblical theology. In the connexion of that symbol with all the services of the patriarchal and Levitical periods, there is evidence of the essentiality of that which it represented to the manifestative glory of the Triune Jehovah; and also to the salvation of man, which is graciously made the means of exhibiting that glory in the stupendous work of

Redemption by our Lord Jesus Christ. The silent testimony which the Cherubim bore, during 4000 years of typical adumbration, is rendered vocal by St. John, when he informs us that "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and that these three are one," both in nature and the declaration they make. What that record is, he afterwards states; that "God hath given unto us eternal life," and that "this life is in his Son." This is a record or testimony which could not have been received as true, by the awakened, guilty, and alarmed mind of a sinner, without the most decisive and unimpeachable witnesses. But witnesses to atonement by blood were stationed in the representative heaven of the Tabernacle and Temple, and are now revealed to the eye and ear of faith in the realities which the Cherubim symbolized. To this evidence that "the kingdom of heaven is opened to all believers," I have recourse in seasons of depression and fear, and therein I find relief.

The doctrine of "Repentance towards God," holds a prominent and essential place in the circle of Christian privileges. To inquire what it is, the necessity that exists for an experimental acquaintance with it, and what are its blessed results to the happiness of fallen creatures, is a duty too plain to be denied by those who are acquainted with the first principles of the oracles

of God, and who respect their decisions. Pardon me if I enlarge a little on this weighty subject, as illustrated by the letters I have addressed to you.

I am apprehensive that the doctrine of Repentance is by many persons ill understood; and that the mistakes which are made respecting its nature, have a tendency to leave the mind at rest in the absence of the blessing and a postponement of inquiry for it. It is too often considered as being nothing more than regret occasioned by a review of outward acts of transgression, independent of any change to be Divinely wrought in the heart. But this is not the Scriptural view of the subject. Repentance is a change of heart,* a change in the desires and aversions, the hopes and fears, the joys and sorrows of the will and affections, arising out of new information conveyed to the mind by the word and Spirit of God. Its emotions are the first symptoms of spiritual life, infused by regenerating grace. That life is diverse from the life of the natural man, and opposed to it; and the tendencies of that life are in direct contrariety to any exercises of the soul that precede its infusion.

* Μετανοιαν nos possumus resipiscentiam dicere. *Lactant.* Div. Inst. vi. 24. Resipisco is to return to a right understanding, to recover one's senses. See *Ainsworth's Dict.* and comp. Luke xv. 17.

The view which we have taken of the original state of the human soul, of its fall and its restoration by the Grace of God, will shed light on the necessity and nature of true repentance. Its life, its happiness, in its creation state, consisted in communion with its Creator, the enjoyment of his favour and presence.—The loss which it sustained by the fall consisted chiefly in its separation from God, and its "alienation from the life of God." The penalty threatened was immediately inflicted—the soul *died* on the instant of transgression, by the forfeiture of that which was its life; and the body became mortal. Repentance is, essentially, a consciousness of that loss, and a desire to recover what has been forfeited. It is a perception newly produced, that the favour of God and communion with him, are indispensably necessary to the happiness of a rational and immortal being; that nothing can supply the place of these blessings; and that they must be regained, or the soul be left in hopeless misery. This prepares the way for faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, or a thankful reception of the Gospel-plan which opens the only door of hope in regard to this recovery. And hence it is that we so often find repentance and faith mentioned together as instrumental in the restoration of the soul to God, and holiness, and heaven.

The analogy on which we have so largely

dwelt, illustrates this by furnishing a comparison easy to be understood, a case of exact parallelism. A suspension of animal life has taken place in a human body. By the blessing of God on the use of means, resuscitation is effected. What is the first consciousness that would arise in the agony of returning life? As air replenished the lungs, there would be sensation of difficulty in breathing, and of general inability for the healthy functions and exertions of animal life. The effect of this consciousness of disease is a struggle, in all the springs of life, for a restoration of pristine health, and vigour, and enjoyment. This effort cannot be of transient duration, but will continue till health and all its powers are regained.

Such, analogically, is "Repentance towards God." Communion with God, and capability for His service, are its complex object. Hence the relation to God which is ascribed to it. It is "Repentance *towards God.*" It cannot precede the restoration of Divine life by regenerating grace; but it is a necessary effect, and the best evidence of that restoration or regeneration. It is sensation respecting spiritual things which before had no existence. And the sensations of Repentance are co-existent with the life of faith, or, with the continuance of the Christian in the present world; because he cannot attain to perfect health till his dismission to another state. *Then* both repentance and faith will be unneces-

sary, because the soul will have attained all that it struggled to attain during its conflict on earth.

"Repentance towards God" is always connected with "Faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ," because that consciousness of loss sustained, and that desire after a recovery of the forfeited blessing, which are implied in true repentance, *must* produce an inquiry after the method of recovery, and a cordial and earnest adoption of its means. That method, Divinely appointed and sanctioned, has been the grand subject of the Gospel-revelation under every dispensation of Divine Truth; and this is the object of faith. Repentance therefore *must* be accompanied with faith, and faith can have no existence without repentance. The two things are contemporaneous, but are distinguishable from each other. Their objects are different. Repentance has God for its object, as the recovery of His favour is its aim; while faith regards our Lord Jesus Christ as the channel of that recovery. The Spirit of God is the author and agent of both.

The analogy which has been suggested between a resuscitation of animal life, and that of the life of spiritual sensation by the regenerating power of God, shows the error of supposing, what is too commonly maintained, viz. that faith can exist irrespectively of sanctifying influence and good works. Faith is the correlative of Repentance, and cannot be separated from it; and

Repentance is a consciousness of the loss sustained by the fall, and an habitual effort to regain the blessings so lost. Those blessings are *felt* by the true penitent to be essential to his happiness, here and hereafter; and therefore the habitual effort to regain them is paramount to every other consideration. That effort is faith, the object of which is comprehensive. It embraces Christ, the atoning Saviour as the means, and the fruition of God, the only satisfying portion, as the end. It pursues the end by the Divinely prescribed means. The "sanctification of the Spirit into obedience" is sought through "sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." It is to this hope that the penitent soul is begotten again. (1 Pet. i. 2.) The sensibilities kindled by the new birth, though varied in their nature and object like those of animal life, are inseparable: they co-exist, and cannot be disunited. They depend one on another. "Repentance towards God" is always combined with "faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ:" that "faith worketh by love:" and that love, when it prevails in the heart, can no more be inoperative, than a due motion of the heart in the animal frame, can fail of producing a due circulation of the blood, and a promptitude to the use of the limbs.

There is another error which this analogy will correct, and it is one of the first importance. It

is an error which our 13th Article stigmatizes as a popish figment of "the school authors," and rebuts in the strongest terms. It is the folly of supposing that "works done before the grace of Christ and inspiration of his Spirit," can be "pleasant to God," or that they can "make men meet to receive grace," or "deserve grace of congruity." So far from having any *congruity*, or agreement in character, with that which is "pleasant to God," and which recommends to his favour, such works "have the nature of sin," and therefore expose to greater condemnation. They are the reverse, in their motive and end, of works dictated by "the grace of Christ and inspiration of his Spirit." The absurdity which the article stigmatizes is that of supposing that spiritual action can precede spiritual life; that a soul "dead in trespasses and sins, can have an aptness in itself for the exercises of a life which is, in its origin, tendency, and end, opposed to the state of our carnal nature, which is altogether "earthly, sensual, and devilish," in its rise, progress, and issue. "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit: A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit; neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit: Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire." Matth. vii. 16—20.

The nature of faith is illustrated by its exercise under the patriarchal dispensation. It is credit given to testimony. The life of *faith* is opposed to that of *sense*. 2 Cor. v. 7. Its results, in comfort and sanctification, arise not from the exercise of the senses on objects with which they are conversant, but from the veracity of a revelation made to us. And, as the objects of faith are appreciated by the regenerate soul as being of the highest and everlasting importance;—and as the attainment of those objects is opposed by difficulties insurmountable to human wisdom or power;—as the channel of that attainment (of pardon and justification unto life eternal) is the mysterious interposition of God's co-equal and co-eternal Son on our behalf, His incarnation, sufferings, and death;—the justifying faith can rest on no evidence short of the testimony of God, the attestation of the Three heavenly Witnesses. As it is connected with repentance which is the exercise of life Divinely infused, it is of the operation of God as its author; and as it is exercised about things which God only could reveal, it has the word of God for its foundation and sanction.

This faith, under whatever dispensation it have been exercised, has been convérsant with "things not seen;"—it has been "the substance of things hoped for." The subjects of the testimony to which it relates, are either things past or future;

or, if they are things which are in present operation, they are things of which our senses can have no cognizance. The subjects proposed to the faith of the patriarchs were, chiefly, future realities, for the expectation of which, at the appointed time, they had the warranty of Divine promise, illustrated and confirmed by a ritual which explained their nature. Though believers who were contemporary with the incarnation, saw with their bodily eyes the promised Saviour, and heard with their ears the gracious words which proceeded out of his lips; yet the persuasion that He was the Son of God, was built on Divine testimony; and was also the effect of Divine influence, as appears from its restriction to those to whom it "was given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God." The objects of our faith are past, present, and future realities. We believe that the Son of God hath come, and hath made, by His one offering of Himself once for all, a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world. We believe that "He now ever liveth to make intercession for us"—We believe that He will come again "to be glorified in His saints, and admired in all them that believe."

Thus "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." It realizes objects of which we can have no other evidence than that of Divine testimony. It receives the

record of God, and so sets to its seal that God is true. It derives strength from its own exercise, while it proves the adaptation of the record to the wants of a guilty and helpless sinner; and thus it carries the believer through all the temptations and trials of this world, till it loses itself in the immediate vision of its object in the world to come.

It is with the heart that man believeth unto righteousness" or "justification of life." Faith is not an act of the understanding unconnected with the affections; but it is the act of both, and chiefly of the latter. Hence its blessed effects in overcoming the world, and in sublimating the desires and tendencies of the soul. Hence it is that believers are described as those who "*look*,* not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen." The former are brought into subordination to the latter. Time and eternity are weighed and compared by the balance of truth, and the latter habitually predominates. There may be an assent to truth without the production of any such effect; but the faith which justifies, changes the bias of the mind, and fixes it "surely where true joys are to be found." Like the needle in the compass, it may be shaken by temptation; but it again reverts to its polar direction and rests there. Such was the faith of

* Σκοπουντων· 2 Cor. iv. 18.

Enoch and of Noah, of whom it is recorded that they "walked with God;" and such was the faith of the subsequent patriarchs of whom we read that they "all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off," (namely, by faith in the testimony of God concerning them) "and were persuaded of them, and embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." And, surely, under our more distinct views of Christ and His salvation, faith must be productive of the same effects, and lead to the same results, in a still greater degree, or it cannot be the same principle. Unless it manifest itself by the same fruits, it can be nothing more than that faith which cannot save, and which is dead being alone; in other words, it must be quite distinct from the living principle which is connected with "repentance towards God,"—it can be nothing but a cold assent to truth, of which the importance is never felt, and the consequences never appreciated.

The doctrine of sanctification is also illustrated by the analogy which has been described. It is a continuance and growth of that spiritual life which is infused by regeneration. The terms differ from each other, as the latter imports the first communication of grace, while the former describes its progress towards perfection. A state of sanctification is, like the growth of animal life from its birth to its maturity, maintained by

the same influence which at first produced it. As "it is the Spirit that quickeneth," so also it is Divine influence that keeps the quickened soul alive. The growth of animal life and vigour is aided by its own acts in using food and exercise; but it does not originate in them; its co-operation in these respects depends on its communion with vital air, without which no co-operation could take place, and, if it could, would avail nothing. It is by that energy which St. Peter calls the "Sanctification of the Spirit," that believers become "obedient children," and maintain "a lively hope of an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, which is reserved in heaven for them who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." 1 Pet. i. 2, 3. An unsanctified soul has no spiritual sensibilities, is incapable of sympathy with the heavenly host, could not join in the song of the redeemed, nor derive pleasure from an association with them. Hence the necessity of being born again, the reason of which is assigned by our Lord when he adds, "That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto you, Ye must be born again." John iii. 6, 7. The process of spiritual life commences in a new birth; is maintained by sanctifying grace; and is consummated in glorification, which is the maturity of "the new creature in Christ Jesus."

This view of sanctification is opposed to the error of the Pelagian, who considers it as self-wrought, as an improvement of natural reason; and to that of the Antinomian, who denies its existence, or disconnects it from any co-operation of its subject. Regeneration finds the soul "dead in trespasses and sins," without any power or will to co-operate in its own resurrection to newness of life. But life being infused, "the new born babe" becomes active in promoting its own growth. By a diligent use of all "the *means* of grace," by the exercise of faith in Divine promises, by prayer, by watchfulness, by a constant exertion of the strength it enjoys, it is instrumental in promoting its own spiritual advancement: and hence appears the propriety of exhortation to dependence on the Spirit of God, and a derivation of grace from the fulness of Christ,—on the one hand; and to the most energetic employment of our own spiritual faculties, and the exercise of grace received,—on the other.

Good works are the spontaneous effects of spiritual life. They are not that life; they are not the cause of that life, but its effects and outward manifestations. They are, however, indispensably necessary as evidences of spiritual life, and as means of maintaining and increasing it. For, as exercise strengthens the body and promotes its health, so do these exercises of "the new man in Christ",

invigorate the soul and promote its advancement to maturity. They do not precede faith but follow it;* and though the regenerate believer is a voluntary agent in their performance; yet is he, in every act, as much dependent on influence from above, as is the natural man on the air he breathes. The evidence becomes stronger as the infant, whether in nature or in grace, approaches to manhood; but any manifestation of vital energy demonstrates the existence of life in its respective subjects.

The grand doctrine of atonement, the foundation and distinguishing feature of the religion prescribed to fallen man, derives strong confirmation from the Patriarchal Theology, and is greatly illustrated by it; and from hence chiefly has arisen the contemptuous treatment which the book of Genesis, the record of that Theology, has received from the opponents of the doctrine of expiation. With a view to weaken and destroy its evidence on this subject, the revelations of God have been converted into fables, and the patriarchs represented as little removed from the state of savages. And it is not without reason that those who deny the necessity of a proper satisfaction for sin, disclaim the evidence to be derived from this earliest history of man; for if the institution of sacrifice be of Divine origination,

* Art. xii.

and if it be coeval with the entrance of sin into the world;—if it be connected with the first promise of a Redeemer from the guilt and penalty of sin;— if the duty of offering prefigurative victims were enforced by repeated revelations, renewed as often as a neglect or depravation of the rite rendered correction necessary;—and if it be found to have been practised and continued, in successive generations of the faithful, from the fall to the appearance of our Lord to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself;—the evidence in support of the doctrine, that "without shedding of blood" there is no possibility of the remission of sin, is thereby greatly corroborated. The three dispensations being thus grooved into each other, form a bulwark to the creed of Christians, which will resist every attack made upon it. Had there been a chasm in the history of man,—an interval, however short,—during which salvation had been attained without the necessity of "showing forth the Lord's death," some plausibility might have been attached to a scheme which rejects the faith which is found to have been delivered to man so soon as he became a sinner and needed its provisions. In that case it might have been argued that the doctrine of atonement is not built on its indispensable necessity to the vindication of Divine justice and faithfulness in the justification of transgressors. But the record shows that there has been no such chasm,—no such interval

of what has been miscalled "natural religion," a religion independent of a revelation from God. On the contrary it states, that when the first transgressor had only two sons, one of them was rejected by God, in a professed act of worship, for slighting the prefigurative ordinance of animal sacrifice, while the other found favour by the appointed expression of faith in the expected atonement of the promised Seed. "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which (sacrifice) he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it," viz. that more excellent sacrifice which he offered, "he being dead yet speaketh." He continues thereby to speak, to all succeeding generations, of the absolute necessity of atonement by a vicarious victim; he justifies, by his example and its blessed result, the penitent sinner in the recourse he has to the antitypical sacrifice for the pardon of sin and the hope of salvation; he vindicates the character of God in the condemnation of those who reject the method of reconciliation proposed to them, and in the justification of him who believeth in Jesus.

But there is yet another most important subject which derives confirmation and illustration from the patriarchal memoirs; I mean what Bishop Horsley has called "the mysterious commerce of the Divine Spirit with the human soul." From this communion the life of the soul has arisen,

and by that it has been maintained, under every dispensation. The patriarchs, indeed, enjoyed converse with God, oftentimes, by means of external palpable exhibition to their bodily senses. But that exhibition was casual and not permanent: it was not the cause of spiritual life, though it was confirmatory of faith; for, had such exhibition been the cause of life, Cain, who heard the voice of the Lord speaking to him as well as Abel, and who saw, as well as his brother, the symbol of the Divine presence in their common place of worship, would have been vitally influenced by what he saw and heard as Abel was. But the one found acceptance, while the other was rejected; and the cause of that rejection was the want of a living faith in the atoning Saviour, which faith was, is, and must be, "of the operation of God" the Holy Ghost. These outward manifestations were, under former dispensations, necessary to the establishment of faith; but their necessity is now superceded by the fulness of the written Divine Revelation. The power, however, which alone can give efficacy to a visible or written discovery of Immanuel,—"God" to be manifested, or become "manifest in the flesh,"—has, in every period of the church, been indispensable. For want of it Cain, and other antediluvian infidels,—Balaam, and the unbelieving Israelites,—fell short of salvation; and to the enjoyment of this influence

believers have uniformly ascribed all their exercises of faith and hope. This commerce of the Divine Spirit with the fallen soul of man is the cause of all spiritual sensation. This gives efficacy to all the means of grace. It is thereby that "we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us;" that "we are one with Christ, and Christ with us." The living faith in the One Redeemer, whether antediluvian or post-diluvian,—whether prospective or retrospective,—has been produced, maintained, and crowned with success, by virtue of that Divine Influence, which we know was in operation from the beginning,* and will be in operation till the end of time.† In this atmosphere the renewed soul lives, and moves, and has its being; and to this influence are to be attributed those temporary convictions, which, like a galvanic shock on the organized but lifeless body, produce ineffectual emotion in the torpid conscience of the unrenewed mind.

The second coming of our Lord, and the end for which he is to appear, were tenets of the patriarchal creed. Whence St. Jude derived the prophecy which he has ascribed to Enoch, whether from tradition or immediate Divine communication,‡ may be a matter of inquiry;

* Gen. vi. 3.

† Rev. xxii. 17.

‡ "Enoch's prophecy seems to have been generally known among the Jews. For the first words of it, which in the

but the inspiration of the Epistle in which the prophecy is recorded, assures us that it was uttered by him of whom we read that by faith he walked with God during three hundred years after the birth of his son Methuselah, and probably before that event. This prophecy agrees with all the subsequent predictions on the same subject which Revelation has furnished. It is very explicit. It designates Him to whom all judgment is committed. It describes the Majesty of his appearance and retinue at his second advent. It specifies the end for which He will come, and the grand offence, viz. opposition to Himself, which will be the chief ground of the condemnation of impenitent sinners. Surely there is enough in this prediction to prove that the patriarchs were not left in utter ignorance of the things which pertain to the Kingdom of God.

The truth of this prophecy was confirmed and its doctrine illustrated by the subsequent translation of its author to heaven in his whole person. Thereby demonstration was afforded of a future state of reward and punishment, and that in relation both to the body and the soul.

Hebrew" (or rather in the Chaldee) "are Maran Atha, were used by them with great propriety, in that form of excommunication or cursing, which they pronounced upon irreclaimable offenders, as they put all who were present in mind of God's coming at the last day, to punish the obstinately impenitent. This same curse the Apostle Paul pronounced on all wicked Christians. 1 Cor. xvi. 22." *Macknight's Note.*

But the prediction of Enoch was awfully established by the catastrophe which followed its publication to the world. The destruction of that world by the universal deluge, and the salvation of a few by means of the ark, afforded at once a testimony of the evil of sin, and of the faithfulness of God both in his threatenings and promises; and also an anticipation of the final judgment. In this latter view St. Peter has employed it in his second epistle. He produces it as evidence of the truth of those prophetic declarations which assure us that the world will be yet once more destroyed by fire. The flood was the first fruits of the vintage of the wrath of God, the wine press of which is to be trodden in the great day of the Lord God Almighty. The patriarchal history is therefore a solemn warning to the scoffers of these latter days; for the predictions of our Lord and his Apostles will be as surely fulfilled, as were those of Enoch and Noah. Indeed the former universal catastrophe, of which every part of the world affords the most complete evidence, preaches to us the certainty that "the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat,—the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burnt up." The threatened deluge of water was far more improbable to the infidel antediluvians, than is the

predicted conflagration to men of the same character now; for the former might have asked where is a sufficiency of water to be found, whereas the same question cannot be asked in relation to the means to be employed in the final catastrophe: and the actual occurrence of the former shows the possibility and probability of the latter. The truth of God in the fulfilment of the one prediction leaves no doubt that he will fulfil the other also. The catastrophe of the deluge is therefore produced by St. Peter in reply to the daring question, and to the argument on which it is founded; "Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the Creation." The assertion is false; and the inference from it impious and delusive. Every portion of the earth, from the lowest valley that can be found to the summit of the Andes, bears witness to the veracity of Jehovah, and every instance of geological research adds to the evidence before obtained.

The science of Geology, then, as illustrating and confirming the patriarchal history, unites in enforcing the practical inference which St. Peter has drawn, "Wherefore, beloved, seeing ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace without spot and blameless." This is, assuredly, the duty and privilege of the Christian believer, who anticipates his Lord's

coming. It is his duty and interest to consider "what manner of person he ought to be in all holy conversation and Godliness." All these things with which he is now conversant shall be dissolved; let him then not make up his happiness in them, but let him "look for, and hasten unto, the coming of the day of God."

The patriarchal sacraments, like those of the Jews and those of the New Testament, had a direct relation to the grace of Christ. They were outward and visible signs of expected blessings, Divinely appropriated to the purpose of prefiguring them; whereas our sacraments are memorials of those blessings, already bestowed on us. Though every standing symbolic rite of the patriarchal dispensation, "ordained by God Himself," as all such symbolic rites were, had the character of a sacrament; I shall specify but two, viz. Sacrifice and Circumcision. The former was ordained of God to be employed in continual remembrance of the future sacrifice of the death of Christ, and of the benefits to be received thereby. The latter was ordained as a badge or token of profession to mark the difference between the seed of Abraham and the idolatrous world, when a prevailing apostacy from the true religion had rendered such a distinction necessary. The act of circumcision *virtually declared*, what the adherents of the true faith before the flood *literally declared*, when they

"began to call on the name of Jehovah," in order to distinguish their worship from that of the Aleim of Apostates. It was a declaration of belief that the original promise of Paradise, afterwards renewed to Abraham, would assuredly be fulfilled, and an open avowal that all their hope of mercy was suspended on that fulfilment. It was an open renunciation of every other foundation of dependence, or source of happiness.

But "sacraments are not only badges or tokens of profession; but rather they be sure witnesses, and effectual signs of grace and God's good will towards us, by the which He doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken but also strengthen and confirm our faith in Him." (Art. xxv.) Such were the patriarchal sacraments, and such are our own also. They testified God's purpose of mercy to the world; and to the individual who partook of them in the exercise of faith in their intent and object. To partake of a sacrament is like interchanging counterparts of a deed of conveyance, in which one of the parties is beneficially interested. God thereby insures the benefit; and man professes himself to be a thankful recipient of those benefits, and to renounce whatever is inconsistent with the enjoyment of them. Such is the baptismal vow in Christian baptism, and the same was implied in submission to the prefigurative rite of circumcision.

The reason why circumcision was not instituted till the time of Abraham, five hundred years after the flood, while the rites of sacrificature were instituted immediately after the fall, appears to have been this: Till the world had become generally corrupt in its creed and practice, it was unnecessary to make the distinction which circumcision was intended to create. Before the flood believers, in consequence of growing corruption, distinguished themselves from Apostates by invoking the name of Jehovah, the one living and true God; Gen. iv. 26. and as the flood would soon restore a unity in the profession of the true faith, by destroying the world of the ungodly, and as, in the interval, the longevity of man rendered traditionary instruction less uncertain than it became when, after the flood, human life was so greatly shortened, Divine wisdom and pity saw no necessity for such a distinction. But when it pleased God, in the exercise of that wisdom and pity, to set apart, in consequence of prevailing heterodoxy, a single family for the preservation of the true faith, then in danger of total extinction; it appears to have been a wise and gracious measure to mark out that family as a people who, in all their generations, till their separation from the world was fully answered by the fulfilment of the great promise, should "dwell alone, and not be

reckoned among the nations."* With a view to this distinction it was ordained that every male of the seed of Abraham, or that was to be incorporated with his posterity, should undergo this bloody rite, or be exposed to be "cut off from his people," as having broken God's covenant; being excluded by the want of this token from any claim to its provisions.

With respect to the other rite which I have mentioned, that of sacrifice, it also had all the characteristics of a sacrament, being "an outward and visible sign of inward and spiritual grace," and "ordained by Christ Himself" (for Christ was the visible God of the patriarchal dispensation†) as a means whereby that grace was to be received and enjoyed, and a pledge to assure thereof. "The outward and visible sign" was a slaughtered animal: "the inward and spiritual grace" was pardon and salvation through *His* sacrifice whom the slaughtered victim represented. It was, as has been proved, a rite of Divine ordination; and was God's appointed mean of conveying the blessing it exhibited, and a pledge, on the part of Him who ordained it, to assure the believing offerer of an interest in the all-sufficient sacrifice of the Son of God. While circumcision, being the appointed door of admis-

[redacted] Num. xxiii. 9. † 1 Cor. x. 9.

sion into the visible patriarchal church, as Baptism is into the Christian church, was directed to be performed on every infant at the age of eight days, and required no repetition with respect to the same individual; the rite of sacrificature, like the Christian Eucharist, was to be continually repeated (weekly, if not daily as it was afterwards in the Jewish church) for the purpose of preserving a conviction of the forfeiture of life and happiness incurred by transgression, and of keeping alive that faith in the atoning virtue of redeeming blood to which the act related.

As the two consecutive rites of circumcision and baptism were evidently intended to answer the same purposes, viz. to distinguish the servants of the true God from the rest of the world,—to furnish a pledge, on His part, for the fulfilment of His promises in the several dispensations to which they belonged, which promises all centered in salvation by one and the same Divine Mediator, —and to record a pledge, on behalf of the recipient, of faith and obedience,—it appears to me that when the sacrifice of the cross rendered a change necessary in the outward and visible sign, the age of the parties to be admitted into the church, and to be entitled to its privileges, by the substituted ordinance of Baptism, remained unaltered. As no change was Divinely prescribed, I can discern no authority for making a[redacted]s

in respect of the exact day which was appointed for circumcision in consequence of the ceremonial uncleanness which, under the typical dispensation, was considered to be attached to a new-born infant, and, perhaps also in consequence of the danger which might attend so painful an operation at an earlier period. What reason can exist why the token of God's covenant, as circumcision is called, Gen. xvii. 11, should be conferred on the descendants of Abraham in their infancy, and be denied to the infant children of Christians? Are our privileges less than theirs; or, is there any responsibility connected with baptism which was not connected with circumcision? If the child of an Israelite might be legitimately bound by stipulations, to which, at the time, he could not be a conscious party, why may not the child of Christian parents be also bound by stipulations corresponding in meaning with those which circumcision implied? What difference is there, in the two cases, between the qualifications for admission, the duties to be performed, or the privileges conferred?

And now, my dear friend, in concluding this lengthened series of letters which at your request I have written, I cannot look back on what I have committed to paper without serious reflection, and lively apprehension, especially as I have promised to comply with an ulterior

request which you have made, that I would commit my correspondence to the press. My apprehensions arise from the conviction of a want of qualification for the task which you have assigned me,—a conviction which has not been lessened, but, on the contrary, increased, by the execution of that task. I fear lest any thing should have dropped from my pen, which may be found inconsistent with "the analogy of faith;" or derogatory from the character of Him, whose glory it has been my object to promote. In travelling over so wide an extent of country, and a country of which the roads are little trodden, at least in our own times, I may have stumbled, but I hope not so as to have fallen into any thing materially at variance with Divine Truth. In many parts of my letters I have written with fear and trembling; and have considered, and re-considered what I have committed to paper. Should I have erred in the comparison of spiritual things with spiritual, by which I have endeavoured to conduct my inquiries, I shall readily retract any thing or every thing which I have addressed to you.

And now, my dear friend, adieu: Let us indulge the gratifying assurance that what we know not now, we shall know hereafter; and that the fountain of life opened at the Fall, and the method of grace adopted under the different

dispensations in which the church has been placed, will afford to those who shall join in the delightful "song of Moses and the Lamb,"* an inexhaustible theme for meditation and thanksgiving through the ages of eternity.

I am

Truly your's

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* See Vitringa in Apocalyps. Ch. xv. 3

THE END.

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